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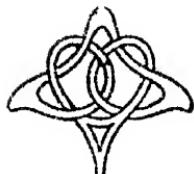
# REBEKAH SIMEON WALKER

REFORMER, EDUCATIONIST  
AND  
PHILANTHROPIST

BY

I. A. ISAAC

With Illustrations



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**REBEKAH**

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# **REBEKAH SIMEON BENJAMIN WALKER**

**REFORMER, EDUCATIONIST  
AND  
PHILANTHROPIST**

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## ERRATA.

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| 83   | 3    | (Foot note) at fire  | on fire                             |
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| 86   | 5    | Cleaveland           | Cleveland                           |
| 87   | 13   | months               | mouths                              |
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| 131  | 2    | loakers-on           | lookers-on                          |
| 136  | 7    | Slaughter-House      | Slaughter House                     |
| 136  | 17   | Physiology           | Physiology                          |
| 141  | 28   | Semion               | Simeon                              |
| 141  | 30   | relegionists         | religionists                        |
| 146  | 1    | Where is thy victory | O Grave ! where is<br>thy victory ? |



# CONTENTS.

|   | <small>PAGE.</small> |
|---|----------------------|
| Childhood                                   | 5                    |
| Her Intended Husband                        | 9                    |
| Marriage                                    | 12                   |
| New Life                                    | 16                   |
| Foreign Lady Doctor                         | 20                   |
| Professional Celebrity                      | 25                   |
| Large Heartedness and Benevolence           | 30                   |
| Kindness to Servants                        | 40                   |
| Help to her Husband                         | 43                   |
| Society for Promoting Morals                | 48                   |
| Rebekah's Lecture Hall or Temple of Hygiene | 50                   |
| Conflagration of the Hall                   | 77                   |
| Children and their Education                | 79                   |
| Rebekah's Seven Letters                     | 82                   |
| First Letter                                | 82                   |
| Second Letter                               | 86                   |
| Third Letter                                | 89                   |
| Fourth Letter                               | 92                   |
| Fifth Letter                                | 96                   |
| Sixth Letter                                | 97                   |
| Seventh Letter                              | 100                  |
| Simeon's Services to Rebekah                | 103                  |
| The Death                                   | 106                  |
| Appendix I                                  | 110                  |
| Appendix II                                 | 118                  |
| Appendix III                                | 120                  |
| Summary                                     | 132                  |

## List of Illustrations.

|   |     |     | ... Frontispiece. |
|---|-----|-----|-------------------|
| <b>L. A. Isaaw</b>                              | ... | ... | To face page 4    |
| <b>Simeon Benjamin Walker</b>                   | ... | ..  | ... 12            |
| <b>Rebekah's Servants</b>                       | ... | ..  | ... 10            |
| <b>Rebekah's Family Group</b>                   | ... | ..  | ... 48            |
| <b>John, the eldest Son</b>                     | ... | ..  | ... 79            |
| <b>Benny, the second son</b>                    | ... | ..  | ... 80            |
| <b>Elizabeth and Sarah, Rebekah's Daughters</b> | ,,  |     | ... 86            |
| <b>Elizabeth, M.D., First Daughter</b>          | ... | ..  | ... 96            |
| <b>Rose, late Daughter of Rebekah</b>           | ... | ..  | ... 101           |
| <b>Flora, late Daughter of Rebekah</b>          | ... | ..  | ... 102           |
| <b>Rebekah's Residential House</b>              | ... | ..  | ... 132           |

# PREFACE.

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*"We live in deeds, not years ;  
In thoughts, not breaths ;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial,  
We should count time by heart throbs ;  
He most lives who thinks most,  
Feels the noblest, acts the best."*

It is exhilarating to come across a pure, simple and exalted life, which is not only attractive and stimulating but exemplary as well, and shall live in this record as a guiding genius to modern woman—a life that encountered endless difficulties to be surmounted by indomitable efforts, unswerving perseverance, force of character, sublimity of mind, refinement of grace, devotion to duty and above all warmth of affection. It is the life of an ideal woman, unostentatious in her acts of charity, shedding sunshine over all she came in contact with, both in her professional as well as social life—a woman with a magnificent heart and an invincible desire for learning, which she did her best to impart to her less fortunate sisters. She rose from poverty, triumphed over her misfortunes, emancipated herself from ignorance and superstition. She educated herself notwithstanding discouragement and opposition from friends and relations and lived to enjoy the exquisite pleasure of

her wonderful achievements. She was all goodness and greatness, softness and sweetness. She was a priceless gem of womanhood and a *queen* among women. Providence had ordained such a remarkable life to Mrs. Rebekah Simeon Benjamin Walker—a magnetic personality of rare power and distinction. She was well-known in Bombay and the surrounding places as her fame had travelled far and wide, owing to her marvellous professional abilities as a ministering angel to her patients, and a woman of philanthropy. She remains unrivalled in the history of celebrated women in domestic life. She was also the mother of a large family, and her children were a source of great joy and happiness to her. She found in their care and training the highest inspiration of her life.

With her death, the glory of Simeon House in Bombay departed. She was an incomparable wife to her husband and her husband likewise was an admirable husband to her. It was nature's perfect union. She breathed her last when she was in the zenith of her popularity. Her husband, an extensive writer, a literary giant, a controversial lion, a powerful speaker and an orator of first rank, who had inundated Bombay with societies for promoting morals in almost every nook and corner, suddenly sank into insignificance, ceased his activities and spent his life lamenting the loss of his saintly wife. It seemed as if his wings were clipped for further intellectual flight and the voice that had once rang on powerful platforms was hushed for ever. Rebekah was the guiding spirit in all his aspirations and inspirations.

The shadow of the departed hours hung heavily on him. His helpmate, inspirer and co-worker, adviser and co-operator had gone to the realms unknown, leaving him heart-broken to linger alone in this world of trial and tribulation.

The present work is an adaptation of the life of Rebekah written by her husband in the Marathi language.

I am very much indebted to my dear wife for rendering valuable help in writing this book and offering valuable suggestions.

I. A. ISAAC.

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I. A. ISAAC.



## CHILDHOOD.

Rebekah was born at Alibag, in the presidency of Bombay in the year 1859. She belonged to a centenarian family as her father and mother, grand-mother and great grand-mother all lived to a patriarchal age. Her father was a retired military officer and had served for nearly four decades in a Bombay Native Infantry and had fought gallantly in many a battle. He was a big made, tall, stately, handsome and vigorously healthy man, held in great esteem by the people of the country, over whom he exercised great influence. He was a man of unimpeachable character and his hospitality was proverbial and knew no bounds. To talk to him was to love him ; no guest ever returned from his house but with a feeling of delight. His family circle was comprised of a number of children, Rebekah being the youngest. Her mother was a gentle, affectionate and large-hearted woman. Her precocious child Rebekah was pretty, well-mannered, highly intelligent and exceptionally good-natured from her infancy. She was always cool and collected and had never been known to have resort to angry words or dissensions of any kind. Obstinacy, jealousy, malice, rancour, ill-feeling, harshness or any thing that goes to injure one's feelings had no place in her heart. She was God's immaculate child, destined to play a noble part among suffering humanity. She was love incarnate, sympathy personified and the acme of modesty and simplicity.

As a child she attended the Government Vernacular School with her elder sister. At home her brothers took a great deal of interest in her education. Her teachers spoke in glowing terms about her application, punctuality, goodness, general deportment and sweetness of temper. In fact, she was held up as an example to the whole school. There are several anecdotes of her childhood relating to her extraordinary intelligence, character and magnanimity of heart, worth narrating here, but for want of space we shall confine ourselves to only a couple of cases that made a profound impression on those that witnessed the incidents.

Once a married sister from Bombay came on a visit to her parents. On such occasions parents are wont to treat their children with special attention and it was a time of merry-making. One day her sister was trying her hand at some almond sweets. She had made some steamy hot sticky substance which obstinately stuck to the rolling pin. The manufacturer being a novice at the process, could make no headway. Rebekah, who happened to be near, pointed out her sister's ignorance for not greasing the rolling pin and the board as well, prior to the operations. At this her sister lifted the rolling pin with a jerk, as if to level it at Rebekah's head, when a portion got loose and enveloped Rebekah's wrist scorching her terribly and sending her rolling on the floor with excruciating pain and piteous cries. All efforts to throw it off were vain. Her mother rushed to relieve the poor girl writhing in agony, and using a certain amount of force, wiped the hot paste from

her child's hand with her apron. This action tore a piece of flesh from Rebekah's hand intensifying her torture. Her mother got furious and started scolding her married daughter. Any other girl in Rebekah's place would have sworn at her sister and kept quiet at her mother's wrath, but not so noble Rebekah. She entreated her mother to stop chiding and pleaded that her sister's act was unintentional and a mere accident. Moreover, she urged that the scolding would in no way soothe her pain. Poor girl, it took fully four to five months for the wound to heal up and it left an indelible mark on her hand which was often a subject of jocular remarks in the family afterwards.

Another of Rebekah's examples of greatness of mind was when she was about twelve years old. It was couched in her reply to the Educational Inspector of her school, which is equally commendable.

On a prize distribution day, the Inspector had instructed the teachers to award her a number of prizes for her passing with honours in different subjects, but they exchanged them for inferior ones, reserving Rebekah's for other girls. The Inspector immediately detected the change and took the teachers to task for violating his orders. They all got confused and remained silent for a while, then replied that the substitution was of the girl's choice. Surprised, he instantly questioned Rebekah as to why she preferred the inferior presents. She, without losing her presence of mind or giving umbrage to anybody, prudently replied that her teacher's choice

was her choice. The Collector of the place presiding on this auspicious occasion was very much struck with her thoughtful reply and was so pleased that he gave her a handsome present from his private purse.

---

## HER INTENDED HUSBAND.

Her would-be partner in life was an exceptionally talented lad, living next door to her father's house in a street inhabited by high class Hindus. His father, Benjamin, was a cloth merchant, a God-fearing, respectable and educated individual, well-versed in Marathi, Gujrathi, Urdu and Persian. He was known for his honesty. His shop was very popular and had the reputation of straight dealing. No advantage was taken of an inexperienced person and even a child received the same courtesy as an expert buyer. Both he and his wife were blessed with industrious, virtuous and benevolent dispositions. They were a tall, handsome couple and specimens of health.

Their son, Simeon, an embryo genius, a future moralist, educationist, social reformer, voluminous writer and orator of no mean type, was ten years senior to Rebekah. There was a friendly relation between these two families. In fact, their love for one another was so great that they considered themselves members of one great family. Rebekah and Simeon played together and shared each other's joys and sorrows. Their fondness for each other grew apace.

At this time a great calamity happened. Benjamin, who was in comfortable circumstances, died suddenly, leaving four children. Simeon was then in his early teens. Though his business was in a flourishing condition, with three clerks and half a dozen servants,

it unfortunately came to grief within a year or two for want of tactful management, and the whole family was reduced to abject poverty. His opulent relations, and those who lived on his hospitality and were obliged to him for many a good turn, hid their faces instead of coming to the rescue of his children. The sorrow-stricken family realised the truth of the saying "Wealth bringeth many friends ; but the poor becometh separated from his only friend." There were no communal institutions to look after the needy, the destitute, the widows and the orphans. While drudging along in the awful anxiety to find ways and means out of the embarrassed circumstances, providentially there appeared on the scene a staunch friend of the late Benjamin, in the person of Samuel Elijah Varulkar Gubbay—a champion of every thing that was good and noble—a gentleman of high repute and unblemished character, to prove the validity of the proverb "a friend in need is a friend indeed" or the saying of the Mahabharat to the effect that "he is a true relation who helps in one's distress." This gentleman volunteered to take charge of the lad Simeon and his English education, and brought him to Bombay. Simeon made rapid progress. He was permitted to visit his poor mother twice a year during his school vacations. This gave him an opportunity to renew his former affection for Rebekah and make up for lost time.

It is said misfortune does not come singly, but in battalions. Within three years after the demise of her husband, Mrs. Benjamin lost two children within the space of fifteen days. Her poignant grief was

inconsolable, and probably she might have succumbed under the affliction, had it not been for her hope in her bright son Simeon, in whom she saw the promise of a rising star. She repaired to Bombay at the solicitation of her son. Simeon never forgot his old acquaintances. He held a regular communication with Rebekah's mother and brothers. His letters were always instructive and delightfully full of morals, and of such a soul-inspiring nature that they were read with avidity filling the hearers with admiration. The epistles were written neatly and in bold characters, they were much lauded and so commanded the approbation of the whole family that they were hung on the walls in the drawing-room as if they were talismans.

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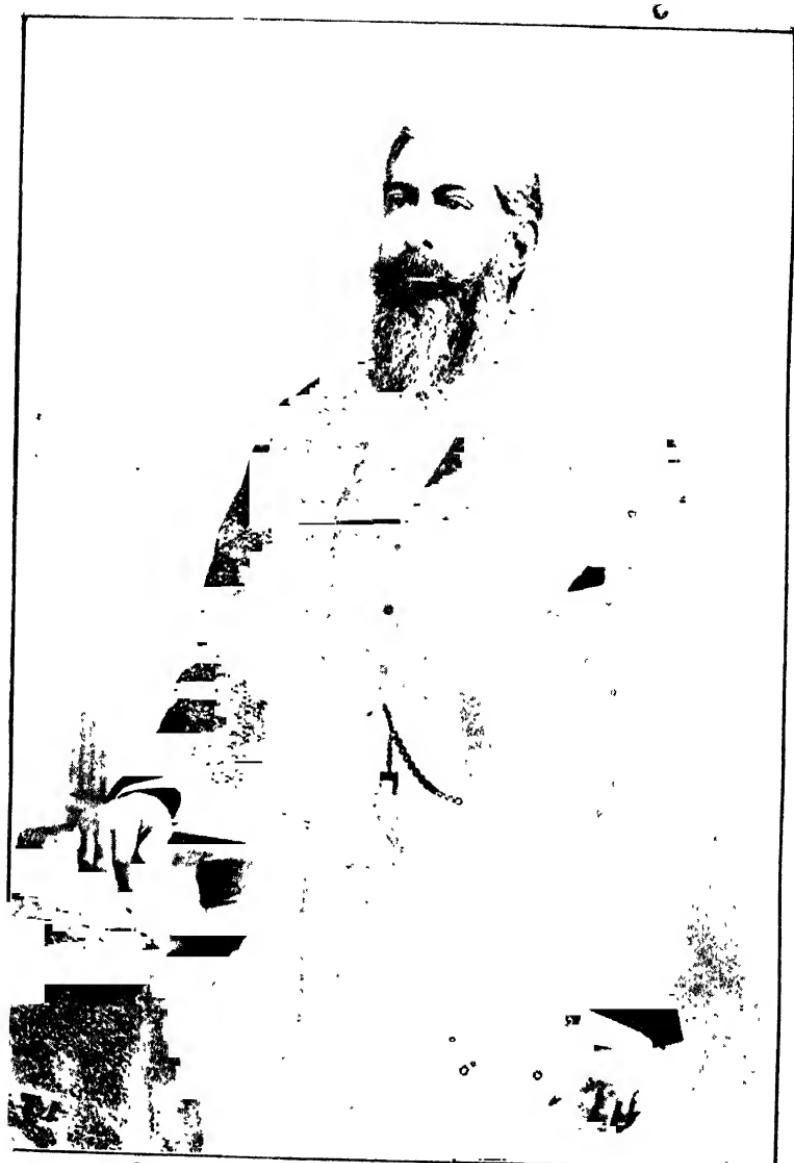
## MARRIAGE.

*"The wise and strong man is often the architect  
of his own good fortune"—Tasso*

The boy Simeon after a few years grew into a promising young man, and being anxious to help his poor mother, started earning a decent living by tuition and clerical labour. His mother one day broached the subject of marriage to him, when he expressed his views freely with these words :—

'Dear mother, let me tell you that I have certain ideas of my own on the matter. I believe that a man who has not accumulated sufficient funds for the expenses of his marriage, has made no provision for the future and is not in a position to keep his wife comfortable, has no right to enter its sacred domains.

It is my conviction that the chosen partner of one's life should be healthy and of good pedigree. It is not a question of only having a wife but a question of a fit companion who will share her husband's intellectual achievements and enter into his very life purpose. We often find girls proving themselves utterly worthless who are as beautiful as Venus, as pure as the lily, yet lacking that noble trait of companionship with an intelligent man who has a great object to accomplish in life. A pretty face and a handsome figure are not to be despised, but a devoted soul, thoughtful mind, amiable disposition, judicious head and a loving heart that



**SIMEON BENJAMIN**



will stand the test of the trials of life is certainly preferable. In tastes and sympathies, husband and wife ought to be of one mind. Can one expect happiness out of an ill-assorted union of two souls with dissimilar tastes and purposes ? It is essential that the wife should be pure and virtuous, industrious and of good taste, possessing good judgment coupled with the qualifications of a good house-keeper. At a time of exigency she ought to be competent and able to put her hand to anything. An obstinate, frivolous, ill-tempered wife will oppose her husband at every turn and baffle all his projects, while a cheerful, gentle and loving wife will crown his efforts with success by her devotion and womanly virtues. King Solomon very aptly describes in Proverbs the characteristics of a virtuous and industrious woman.'

"Who can find a virtuous woman, for her price is far above rubies." "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil."

"She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy."

"Her children arise up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praiseth her."

'Dear mother, where am I to find a life companion of such merits to fulfil my ideal ?

'It is said one should select a wife that he would like to be reproduced in his children. If she is good and noble it will prove a blessing, otherwise a

curse. If she has moral shortcomings, his children will inherit them and nothing can counteract the sad results. Marriage is for life and one false step would lead to perpetual misery, penance and purgatory, sending one to an early grave.'

'Dear mother, such being my views on this all-important question of marriage, I would prefer to live a life of continent celibacy and devote myself to intellectual pursuits, which would help me to throw rays of light on the path of my ignorant countrymen and lift the veil of darkness for them.'

Her mother belonged to the old school. She pressed her son from time to time as she was anxious to see him settled in life before she closed her eyes on the world.

Simeon knew that it was not possible to satisfy his mother's wish as his ambition in life was high. His thirst for knowledge amidst endless difficulties increased daily and the young man continued his literary pursuits living on the hard-won earnings of his pen. In course of time he yielded to his mother's oft-repeated entreaties. He told her that he was willing to enter the bonds of wedlock with his slender income if by good fortune the gentle Rebekah accepted him, as it was his opinion that she was competent to steer the bark of life quite safely and well. The poor mother was radiant with joy at her son's decision, and without losing any time, asked Rebekah's parents for the hand of their daughter. They accepted the offer with delight and the couple were married at Alibagh on the

2nd of April 1875. The marriage ceremony was preformed with great eclat. Almost all the influential official and non-official residents of the place attended the wedding. There were great rejoicings. The toast of the bride and bridegroom was proposed by one of the most prominent personages of the place and other important people indulged in eulogistic speeches on the occsaion, which were suitably replied to by the bridegroom.

---

## NEW LIFE.

*"Rest not—life is sweeping by,  
Do and dare before you die  
Something worthy and sublime,  
Leave behind to conquer time."*

After a few days the happy couple left for Bombay. On the very day of their arrival Simeon placed a book in the hand of his young bride and started giving her lessons. Notwithstanding the cares and responsibilities of domestic life, she applied herself resolutely to her studies and within a short time made extraordinary progress. The husband remarking the bent and intelligence of his wife, entered with vivacity into the work of moulding her after his heart. In a few months she joined a midwifery class in the Grant Medical College, her mother-in-law and another relative forming an escort. It was up-hill work for the young bride who had just begun the battle of life, but she cheerfully undertook it and patiently bore all the privations of their limited means. The midwifery classes were held intermittently for want of candidates as there was not sufficient taste for the profession among the women of her time. Simeon's business was to create that taste, and he succeeded in doing so, for the sake of his wife by impressing on the candidates the benefits to themselves and to their country, by the study of medicine. Rebekah's entrance into the class was looked upon with aversion by her bigoted relations, who placed scores of impediments in her path to prevent her from taking up the profession. They quoted religious

restrictions prohibiting the Hebrews from touching human skeletons and branded her and her husband as disbelievers. She remained obdurate and when threats were used, she sent word that her accusers might prevent their relations from joining Medical College but nothing would stop her from following the course she had adopted.

At this they got more enraged and planned to molest her and her escorts on their way home. At this juncture Simeon brought them under the ban of the police authorities to put an end to their molestations. Finding their efforts futile, they swore vengeance, and succeeded in influencing the bigoted husbands of Simeon's sisters to persecute and torment their wives, in order to bring indirect pressure on Simeon to desist from his plans. These crooked methods induced serious family feuds with disastrous results.

Rebekah's firm determination brought countless blessings not to herself alone but to her community and her country as well. She stood as a pioneer of female education, and since then other girls encouraged by her noble example followed in her footsteps. Rebekah, after attending to her duties, spent all her spare time in reading healthy literature and works concerning her profession under the fostering care of her tutor-husband.

By that time they had a library worth at least Rs. 10,000—consisting of English, Hindi, Marathi and Gujrathi books. She devoted herself a good deal to Vernacular literature on various subjects, and her

reading was not merely a pastime but a regular study. She took copious notes from them. Her husband had made it a practice to ask her after her day's work to give him the summary of all she had read during the day, which added to the stability of her learning. She had a fair knowledge of English as well. Both the husband and wife often read together books on philosophy, religion, science and other subjects, and carried on discussions till late hours on the truth of the arguments contained therein. It was an intellectual treat in which both participated. In her profession she was not an ordinary midwife but had made a thorough study of the diseases of women. To add to her knowledge, she gave her attention to the Ayurvedic system of treatment also. Further she took lively interest in the hundreds of lectures prepared by her husband for the benefit and enlightenment of the public, and went through every one of them.

Though she enthusiastically went in pursuit of knowledge she never neglected her home. She took lessons from Simeon's mother which had made her efficient in the culinary art. She was well up in nursing and the rearing of children. In needle-work, too, she excelled ; in embroidery few could compete with her. On one occasion she was sent for by the Thakur Sahib of Wadhwan on a professional call. When it came to his ears that she was a good needlewoman, His Highness requested her to give instructions in embroidery to the girls and the school mistresses of his school for a couple

of hours during her short stay there. To this she readily consented.

Within a short time she published a few books, contributed largely to the Vernacular papers and delivered useful public lectures to women.

Her works "A Family Medical Adviser" in Marathi, "The Mid-wife or the Delivery of women in labour and Injurious practices connected therewith," in Marathi as well as Gujrathi, "Barreness or Sterility in women," in Marathi and Gujrathi were highly appreciated by the public, as they had made their appearance at a time when there was no literature in Vernacular on the subject, and the peculiar modesty of Indian women precluded them from taking advice of the male doctors.

It so happened that once it came to her knowledge there was a movement on foot to collect large funds to bring out a lady doctor from England to render medical aid to the women of the country. She contributed to several journals a very sensible and far-reaching article showing the futility of such a course.

At this distance of time I have by chance in my possession only a copy of a Vernacular paper called "Dinbandhu" in which one of her articles appeared.

It was as follows :—

---

## FOREIGN LADY DOCTOR.

*To*

*The Editor "The Dinbandhu"*

Dear Sir.

You will be doing yeoman's service to the cause if you will kindly make room for my letter in your popular journal. The correspondence in all the daily papers shows that the sufferings of the Indian women have touched the hearts of the Bombay public with sympathy. Let the question of medical examination alone, the Indian women being more scrupulously modest than their sisters in the West, prefer death to relating their cases to the male doctors even in their serious ailments. My seven years' experience in Bombay and the mofussil among the people of all classes and nationalities verifies this to be an uncontroversial fact. In spite of this sad state of affairs it is paradoxical that our country should not produce a single female doctor to mitigate the sufferings of its women folk while they should abound plentifully in the West where they are not so much in demand. I am informed that the public are contemplating to pay for two lady doctors from England for which purpose Rs. 35,000/or Rs. 40,000/has been estimated and half of the required amount has already been collected. In addition, I suppose, Government will be approached for a grant. Such a noble act is no doubt very commendable, but to me it seems a matter of great regret as these lady doctors will be of no practical use to the poor of the country. I am

at a loss to understand how far their utility will go, when it is known that they will be absolutely ignorant of the language, manners and customs of the people here. I presume the wise leaders of the movement must have thought over these and other problems of the case, but I for one respectfully venture to suggest that it would be far better to train the girls of our country for this noble profession and create facilities which in course of time will fructify a thousand fold.

A few years ago, classes were conducted in the vernacular to train male students through the medium of medical literature in Marathi and Gujrathi. The only thing now required is to revive these classes under the control of the Grant Medical College, to train female students, and I feel confident, a large number of girls who obtained diplomas for midwifery would gladly come forward to take advantage of them, to benefit themselves and to serve their sisters. I would like it to be distinctly understood that I do not mean to convey by my correspondence that for the present people should abandon the idea of getting foreign lady doctors as I firmly believe that it is better to have foreign lady doctors than none at all. The sum-total of my argument is, that to benefit our country permanently, it would be prudent on our part to inaugurate the Vernacular classes for female medical students.

BOMBAY.

*8th February, 1893.*

}

Yrs, etc.

REBEKAH SIMEON

Rebekah was a student all the days of her life. For the benefit of her sex she wrote several articles to the papers, delivered as many lectures in the different branches of the society for promoting morals and in the hall of the Theistic Church called Prarthna Samaj. Almost all the Vernacular papers wrote about her and her works in eulogistic terms and she was held to be one of the most enlightened ladies of the Bombay Presidency. Her other lectures which were ready for the public were embodied in the list of one thousand lectures that were arranged to be delivered by her husband and herself in the Temple of Hygiene built by her at an enormous cost, and dedicated to the public, an account of which will appear later on. The list was freely distributed to the people on the occasion of the inauguration ceremony of the Hall presided over by such eminent men as the late Right Rev. James Mac Arthur, D. D., Lord Bishop of Bombay and the late Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade. The Temple remained open to its votaries all the year round. Not a day passed without a lecture, sometimes two. Sundays and holidays were no exceptions to the rule. Great was the enthusiasm and devotion that prevailed in the lecture hall owing to her husband's able management : he being the life and soul of the institution.

I ask my readers' indulgence for allowing me to mention her husband so often, but they will, I am sure, understand that the life of the husband and wife was so interwoven that the true image of the

beautiful life will not be sufficiently perspective if I were to leave him out.

Rebekah had an unique method of diffusing medical knowledge among her patients, their relations and friends. Every evening she invited them for half an hour or so, to hear her on the subject of their complaints and the evil practices associated with this country which undermined their health often with fatal results. They were requested to ask any question on the subject matter of her discourse and relate their doubts and their own experience to the lecturer. In time these discourses became very popular, being conducted more or less on the principle of homely chats rather than platform orations. The audience went on multiplying and opening their minds freely to imbibe instructions and give up superstitions and injurious habits which did them incalculable harm in the past. This novel idea of imparting knowledge to her ignorant sisters in the form of dispensary lectures came to her mind from the observation of a practice among the Christian missionaries' free dispensaries, where the patients were allowed to gather in a sufficiently large number for a preacher to read certain texts from the Bible and deliver a sermon as if to bless the skill of the physician and the efficacy of medicines.

Rebekah did not confine herself only to the diseases of women but demonstrated the method of rearing healthy children and training them into intellectual, moral and useful citizens. She gave

lessons in sick nursing, the use and abuse of bandages, preparing of poultices, utility of fomentation and appliances of syringes etc. In short, she trained her poor patients in everything that was needful in different ailments.

She had acquired a habit of jotting down at night prior to taking her evening meal her daily experiences after finishing her work. These often occupied her till mid-night or later. Once her mother-in-law advised her to think seriously over the question of keeping up late at night poring over her lengthy notes to which she replied :—

“Mother, were I to stop this practice, I would never be able to go through my work and render useful service to the public.” On another occasion her husband counselled her to place more value on her health, which he feared would give way, than on her notes. She gently responded :—

“By adhering to my programme of work, not only am I benefited but it places me in a position to render better service to my patients and to my country. Women suffer untold miseries and to hide them they beautify themselves. Attired in silk and satin they appear before men in paint and powder. Their outward decking leads men to imagine that they are the happiest creatures in the world, their sufferings are beyond the conception of man ; knowing them as I do I am endeavouring my best to ameliorate their condition. With such pathetic pleadings she continued her self-appointed work, not minding the risk of health.

## PROFESSIONAL CELEBRITY.

*"The greatest of all feelings is  
an utter forgetfulness of self."—Ruskin.*

After obtaining her diploma from the Grant Medical College, Rebekah gradually became an expert in her profession, and her work increased by leaps and bounds. So much so that she had hardly time to partake of her meals. Her studious and benevolent nature, her efficiency and her sympathy for the indigent, played no small part towards her success. People had great confidence in her and her popularity grew to such an extent that those living in the mofussil sent their families to Bombay to remain under her treatment. Rebekah's name became a household word among the female population of the Bombay presidency. She treated her patients as if they were members of her family and took great interest in them and made them feel quite at home. Several well-known doctors recommended Rebekah to their female patients.

The following is one of the letters published in "Induprakash" contributed as a token of gratitude by a gentleman whose wife's case was given up by the local doctors and the Civil Surgeon of Sholapur at the time. This patient was cured by Rebekah in a week. She had a wonderful insight in diagnosing female complaints.

*To*

*The Editor, "The Induprakash"*

Dear Sir,

I shall feel grateful for kindly making room for the following letter in the columns of your popular journal in the interest of the public, and as a mark of my gratitude towards my wife's benefactor.

My poor wife had been suffering for a long time, and was under the treatment of Ayurvedic doctors and a Civil Surgeon. They all failed in giving her relief, though her illness had cost me a large sum of money. They pronounced her case hopeless, and advised us to stop all medicine. My wife was reduced to a mere skeleton. I thought as a last resource I would try some competent doctors of Bombay and removed her there. On arrival, our friends recommended Mrs. Rebekah Simeon to us as an expert in female ailments. My wife had no strength to walk. I immediately put her in a gharry and placed her under Rebekah's treatment. Very soon I found a great change in her and to my surprise she was completely cured in a week's time. Her cure was nothing short of a miracle to us. Mrs. Rebekah Simeon is not only competent but in addition she is kind, good-natured, sympathetic and benevolent. These qualities eminently fit her for the noble profession she is following. I am writing this testimony to direct the attention of other

womenfolk of my country so that they may take advantage of her knowledge.

BOMBAY. } Yours etc.  
*11th March, 1889.* } VISHNU VASUDEO,  
} Weaving Master,  
} THE SHOLAPUR SPINNING &  
} WEAVING CO., LTD.

Hundreds of letters were published in newspapers from time to time by her patients, expressing their gratitude for their cure and her competency which we cannot publish for lack of space.

Doctors' fees are beyond the means of people of ordinary circumstances in complicated cases of confinement of women, and this fact weighed heavily on her mind for a long time. At last she solved the problem. One auspicious day her husband and herself approached an eminent doctor of the day, the late Dr. Shivram Gopal Vaidya, the best surgeon in the Bombay Presidency. His services the opulent only could call for. Even the European professors of the Medical College who thought it beneath their dignity to consult an Indian often sought his advice. Rebekah pleaded before him the cause of the poor, and asked him to extend a hand of sympathy to those who were in unfortunate circumstances. The celebrated doctor proved himself a kind sage, and whenever his services were required by Rebekah in her professional duties, he was ever ready to help her to alleviate human suffering by his skill for little or nothing. He lived a simple life in spite of his prince-

ly earnings. He kept his promise of serving the poor until the day of his death.

Rebekah learned many things from different doctors, a great deal from Dr. Gopal Shivram and last but not the least she gathered much practical knowledge from native *Dai*es. The most difficult of midwifery cases were taught to her by a native *Dai*, blind of both eyes. Rebekah reciprocated her kindness by instructing her in turn in certain up-to-date methods. The native *Dai*es having one subject to master, concentrate all their attention on it, and their life-long experience helps them to become experts in that direction. Unfortunately they are competent in one particular branch only, and are ignorant in other necessary departments of knowledge. They lack all round competency.

On one occasion she was called to see a patient whose case was so bad that it required the use of a certain instrument daily. The husband of the patient, being a poor man, was in quandary, as he could not afford Rebekah's fees. She was not slow to grasp the situation and at once called one of the cooly women, fairly intelligent, from his fuel shop and instructed her in the use of the instrument, the manipulation being quite simple. To make sure that the woman was doing her work correctly, she called next day, and when she was convinced of her efficiency, she turned to the patient and told her that the cooly woman would relieve her and act as her doctor ; requesting her to return the instrument

as soon as she was cured. Needless to mention, the poor patient recovered in a few days, and her husband returned the appliance with many grateful expressions.

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## LARGE HEARTEDNESS & BENEVOLENCE.

*"However it be, it seems to me  
'It's only noble to be good,  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood."*—Tennyson.

Many were the occasions when she had professional calls at midnight, just as she had retired to bed but she was never known to refuse a single case, however tired she might have been. Her dear ones devised several means to save her from being over-worked, particularly when she returned home late quite exhausted after the arduous duties of confinement, but all their efforts were futile. A knock at the door was enough to make her spring from her bed and get ready to accompany the messenger. Her husband was at his wit's end to ensure her health. All appeals to her higher sense to persuade her to rest, had no effect on her, as her heart always over-powered her reason where human suffering needed her. She feelingly expressed her opinion that after having once heard an account of a patient's painful condition, nothing in the world could keep her back. If she were to ignore these human solicitations, said she, she would be proving false to her nature, as the very thought of a patient's agony would cause her to suffer throes of conscience for not rendering help to her sister in distress.

Money was of no consequence to her as she had adapted herself to suit all purses. Hundreds of

cases could be instanced where she could not bear to see the seething poverty. There were times when floods of tears were drawn from her eyes over the misery of the unfortunate and the downtrodden.

A Vernacular paper called "*Mombai Vaibhav*" dated 15th of October 1905 gave a short account of a public meeting held in Bombay in which one of the speakers mentioned her as a mother of the poor, another called her a benefactor of humanity, and a third a guardian angel of the distressed.

Occasionally, Rebekah vividly and sorrowfully described to her people the direful poverty and heart-rending conditions of many of her patients. Their insufficient nourishment, and scanty clothing, dingy and insanitary hovels for want of means brought untold miseries on them.

Some of the scenes that she described would have melted the hardest heart and brought tears to the eyes of her hearers. Stupendous efforts they made to raise her fees. How they strove to borrow a few annas here and a few annas there to make up the amount in the end to be disappointed to find the sum still deficient. Then came the pawning of gold or silver trinkets and in some cases of their *mungalsutra* which is as sacred to a Hindu as the wedding ring is to a Christian. Some poor patients offered ornaments to her as security for payment of the stipulated amount, but Rebekah characterised the acceptance of these as blood money and returned them as presents to her patients from herself. Such noble deeds were not without their rewards. It gave

her great consolation, and the poor people adored her as a living monument of goodness and mercy.

Her benevolence was conspicuous not only in her professional dealings with poor patients, but also with strangers, their troubles being their passports for her sympathy.

On one occasion her husband wanted to pay a visit to a poor acquaintance who was reported to have come in with plague. Rebekah did not like the idea of his going there merely to offer lip sympathy. She remarked that it was a good thing to visit a bedridden friend and sympathise with him but there was not much virtue in that unless the sympathy assumed a practical form ; then only the act could be of some value. Her husband was struck by her sensible remarks, took a handful of silver and asked her if the sum would suffice. She with great kindness rejoined that if he liked he might help himself to more as no act of charity at such a critical time in a man's life was greater than the one she pleaded for. He reached the stricken man and handed over the money to the attendant with instructions to spend it on the patient and, if need be, to apply to him for more. The patient rallied and remembered him with gratitude all the days of his life.

Rebekah was cosmopolitan in her deeds of charity. Her sympathy was as wide as the sky above. Her milk of human kindness was not restricted to any particular nationality, but it flowed to all with equanimity. The following is a remarkable

incident of her large heartedness testifying to her non-sectarian spirit in her acts of philanthropy.

She was asked to pay a visit to a Parsee patient. She discovered to her regret the abject poverty of the family. The sick person disclosed to her that they were passing their days in great hardship owing to inadequacy of food, clothing and medical attendance. Out of fourteen children, she related, only less than half the number was surviving, making their indigence responsible for the sad loss. Rebekah was very much touched with the sad account of such privations, and on returning home expressed to her husband her desire to help at least the two youngest children, a girl and a boy aged five and seven, describing the sad plight of the family. Her husband never crossed her wishes. The next day Rebekah paid the family a visit and mentioned to her patient her intention regarding the two little ones. The mother was delighted to hear the good news and agreed to give them up to Rebekah's care, Rebekah interrupted her, saying, 'that she had no desire to separate them from their parents but would do all she could for their maintenance.' This she faithfully carried out until the last breath of her life.

Another pathetic event of a similar nature is worthy of record. One evening Rebekah was sent for to see a rich patient suffering from lung complaint, after examining and giving full instructions, she was about to step into her conveyance when a poor man stood before her with folded hands evidently for some favour. She asked him to disclose his grievance. The man with great trepidity begged

her to visit a poor patient lying seriously ill somewhere near by, at the same time soliciting the visit to be free of charge. The good-natured Rebekah had not the heart to refuse aid to any one who was actually in need of her help and responded to his appeal by repairing to the place at once. On entering the dark and insanitary tenement she was convinced of the poverty of the patient and gently asked her the nature of her ailment. The woman mentioned quite a series of them, and narrated a pathetic story of her increasing debt and threats of her landlord to eject her for non-payment of rent. Rebekah concluded that the poor woman's sickness was due to her disturbed mentality and overwhelming anxieties and above all to her starvation. Her misery did not end here as she had three children to maintain. The husband and father of these unfortunate creatures was serving his term, eighteen months in prison for some offence that he had committed. Deprived of their bread-winner their condition was woeful. Looking at the bright and helpless children her heart melted, she was on the point of promising some help but recoiled at the idea of doing anything without consulting her husband. She promised to send the medicine and pay another visit the following day.

Rebekah described the misery and suffering of the poor family to her husband and disclosed her intention of paying the patient's debt and giving her a monthly allowance just enough to make ends meet. To this proposal, her equally kind-hearted husband gladly acquiesced.

True to her word Rebekah hastened to the poor patient next day and told her about the help she would render her. The poor woman looked at her with grateful eyes and thanked her abundantly. Rebekah continued her help until such time that the man was released and could stand on his legs.

A Brahmin gentleman of rank wrote to her husband from a village called Chiplun.

He said "Words fall short to describe the loss sustained by the poor people by the death of Rebekah and their grief was beyond measure." He did not know how to repay their kindness for looking after his son in Bombay under their guardianship. Rebekah and her husband had spent a good deal of money on his books, clothes, and comforts and had nursed the lad during an illness. The last words in the letter were, "that there was only one person in this country in whom different traits of benevolence were so marked and universally appreciated by the public and that person was Rebekah."

Instances of private charities are numberless in her eventful life. No needy person ever returned from her door empty handed. She paid number of poor children's school fees, fed the hungry, clothed the naked and gave substantial monetary help to the night schools for the education and betterment of the labourers and backward classes. She supplied monthly provisions of food, etc., to many families, doled out money for their other expenses. She paid arrears of rents for a good many people and paid the debts of others who had been hopelessly embarrassed

for years past and had no chance of redeeming themselves from the clutches of the money lenders.

She had a true insight into their deplorable condition. "Most of the poor", said she, "secure a meal somehow or other and are in constant anxiety for the morrow. If they are fortunate enough to earn a little money, it all goes towards part payment of their accumulated house rent, loans from friends, supplies from shopkeepers for their daily consumption, etc. The day after they are again practically penniless and in the same distress. Thus their debts go on mounting, adding to their miseries and hastening the day of their death. It is beyond human ken to find a solution of this problem of their life. It is unending and unbending. Their lot is something awful and the heart bleeds at so much suffering. Very often one is inclined to vainly argue if the world could not have been made better? Since science and civilisation have not yet found the panacea to their misery, the only way to make their lot somewhat tolerable is to extend the hand of sympathy to them by those who are in easy circumstances."

Rebekah was averse to the idea of being mentioned publicly for her different acts of mercy, but in spite of that her name was frequently published in the journals of the Bombay Presidency.

There is a pathetic story in connection with a house Rebekah had purchased in their neighbourhood. The owner died suddenly and all the management fell on his widow. Having no source of income, she had to mortgage the house in a short time. Her liabilities gradually increased to over Rs. 5000/- with

the result that the house was put up by the creditors for auction. The bid did not go higher than 4500/- The widow appealed to the authorities to stop the sale on the plea of getting a private buyer with hope of securing a better offer. With great difficulty the poor woman managed to get a purchaser for Rs. 5500. However as a final effort she approached Rebekah's husband who was her neighbour with pitiful solicitations to buy the house by offering something more. He was not in need of a house, as they were living in one which was their own property ; besides he did not like the idea of investing his small capital for such a purpose. But the condition of the widow made an impression on his feeling, and he changed his mind. He offered her Rs 6,000 and the bargain was closed. Rebekah was informed by her husband about the transaction with the idea of getting her approbation. As soon as she heard about it her heart melted. She felt keenly the sad plight of the family. She remarked it was only two years ago that she saw the lady happy, surrounded with comforts, with a retinue at her command and within such a short time, this dreadful change took place in circumstances bordering on distress and ruination. She went on that woman's crown is her husband, and if that tumbles, her existence becomes dreary. Anyhow one must face her misfortune with resignation and at such a calamitous time she ought to receive every sympathy, and it is man's duty to help her. But strange is this world ! Instead of coming to her rescue people take mean advantage of her unhappy position, and not only impose on her but rob her to destitution and death.

Is not man more cruel than the brute ? It at least has not been endowed with head and heart as good as man, and can be forgiven. But what about man ? Why should he be so heartless towards his fellow beings ? Why should not fire or lightning consume, the sea swallow and beasts devour these man-eating human monsters ? What need is there in this world of these land-sharks ? Are they not more deadly than the cobra which stings man in self-defence ? Man is more of a brute than the brute itself. Some brutes possess the priceless qualities of obedience and loyalty, faithfulness and utility, love and sacrifice. Even King Solomon with all his wisdom and experience, in sheer despair exclaimed "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

Rebekah argued : What justice can there be that a house strong as a fortress should not fetch half its value because its guiding spirit has gone to its eternal rest ? Is the world justified in depriving his poor helpless mites and widow of sustenance ? It is better to remain in poverty and die honourably than attempt to enrich oneself at the cost of the poor and afflicted.

Rebekah offered the poor widow one thousand rupees more than what was agreed to, and that as a value of the house and not as a matter of favour—with many regrets for not being able to pay more. The poor widow on receiving Rebekah's offer was relieved of the dire anxiety she was suffering for days and thanked her for her kindness. Steps were immediately taken to hand over the property to Rebekah and the episode closed.

We scarcely know where to stop narrating the thousand and one bountiful anecdotes of her wonderful life.

She was an ardent follower of the doctrine of plain living and high thinking. Her husband once asked her to dress in more costly clothes, and put on some jewellery in keeping with her position. Her response was that virtue, kindness and love for one's husband are rich ornaments of a woman, and their possession enhances her beauty. "When I see my rich patients," said she "I do not feel in any way uncomfortable regarding my clothes though they are ordinary, nor any feeling of envy overcomes me, but I do feel uncomfortable when I visit my poor patients. I feel ashamed at the thought that my clothes are many times costlier than theirs, and some of them so scantily attired as to leave certain portions of their body exposed to the public eye. Further my conscience takes me to task for the reason that I go to these poor people decked with gold, however trifling its value, not to dole out charity or improve their monetary status but on the contrary to take away whatever little they possess. Comparatively, my clothes are richer. Besides, I have my conveyance, my servants etc. Of what use is this pomp and show to the people? If we are rich we should help others to become the same. What is the good of our being happy? And how can we be really happy when we see so much unhappiness around us. So long as such a state of things exists it is impossible for a right thinking person to feel happy. What right has one to display his knowledge, wealth or position

before those who are bereft of such boons ? I call those truly rich and great who impart their knowledge to others, make good use of their riches by helping the poor, and assisting others to acquire the position they have gained. The Persian poet, Hafiz, rightly says :—

‘High birth may be a pearl but let thine efforts be  
To rise by deeds : Distinct is greatness from  
birth and pedigree.’

It is only accident of birth that makes one high or low, and fortune and wealth are not distributed to merit. It is only a gift from Heaven. If these are the facts I do not see the wisdom of observing so much distinction between man and man. It is our duty to stir our hands and be on our legs to cheer the sorrowful, visit the sick, heal the broken-hearted, put our hands and hearts to such acts by means of which human woes will be alleviated and human wrongs be righted. Let us turn the wilderness of ignorance, superstition, laziness, hunger and misery into a heavenly abode. As Omar Khyam in glowing terms says :—

‘Better to make one soul rejoice with glee, than plant a desert with a colony, rather one free-man bend with chafis of love, than set a thousand prisoned captives free.’

Let us not spare time, labour, strength nor money in the effort of emancipating the needy and transforming this hell of misery into Paradise. Let us go into the dens of indescribable foulness and prove that even

the most vicious are not beyond reclamation to the ranks of humanity. Let us diffuse gladness and cheerfulness in the sorrow-stricken, and win their profound affection. Let us lay down our lives in harness for the cause of humanity so that we may have the consolation on our death bed that we laboured not in vain to bring forth sunshine to some unfortunate and deluded souls.

Rebekah set free hundreds of souls from bondage of misery and rejoiced the hearts of thousands. Had she been born a Hindu, shrines would have been erected and consecrated to her memory and she would have been worshipped as a goddess of kindness and mercy. But she needs no shrine as the Talmud says "virtuous people do not require the erection of great monuments, their good deeds are their monuments."

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## KINDNESS TO SERVANTS.

*“Minds are not conquered by arms,  
but by Love and Generosity.”—Spinoza.*

“As our children,” she would say, “have every claim on our money and our property, let it be understood that our faithful servants have no less a claim on our possessions. We consider it our bounden duty to watch over the interests of our offspring and make them happy ; in like manner we should think of our servants whose life-long devotion helps us to achieve many things dearer to our hearts. Had it not been for their services we should be quite helpless. They are our strength in the battle of life. Their aid is essential and leaves us to perform our numerous duties and preserve ourselves and others. Very few people are alive to these facts or take such a sympathetic view.”

Rebekah was never known to have lost temper with her servants. She always spoke with them kindly, and they were very attentive to her. Her sweetness of temper had a wonderful effect in moulding their character. They gave her no cause to complain. Everything was done as clock-work in her house. They found it a pleasure to serve her. She, in return, always looked to their comforts and helped them in every way to make their lives worth living.

*“Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge”—  
Shakespere.*

She had a very devoted and faithful Maratha



**SOME OF REBEKAH'S SERVANTS**



servant, named Sonoo from Ratnagiri, who was very poor. In spite of Rebekah's liberal help and the wages which he regularly remitted to his family for years, he was never out of debt ; consequently his condition was wretched. She knew about the village money-lenders and their methods of realising their debts from generation to generation from the poverty-stricken people. Rebekah one day recounted to her husband the sad state of their servant Sonoo ; how miserable he was notwithstanding their liberality to him and had not even sufficient money for his food and much less for his other wants. She feared that the condition of his wife, mother and brothers must be worse. She begged of her husband to send for his creditor and pay off his debt in full. "We have no other means" she declared, "to come out of it and he cannot look to anybody else for his relief. We are his all in all, and we should see that he is happy." Her husband agreed to her proposal, sent for Sonoo's creditor and settled his claim. Later on, when he lost his wife, Rebekah provided him with funds to get married a second time. His house was in a dilapidated state, which she rebuilt and sent monthly remittances to his mother for her maintenance. In this way she brightened his life. Such were her numerous acts of charity. It was the great joy of her life to give to others what she possessed. She found the more she gave the more she had.

We must emphasise the fact that Rebekah and her husband were by no means opulent. They were people of ordinary means with a large family. It was

far from their thought to become accumulators of wealth. The motto of their life was service to humanity. Many were the occasions when Rebekah reiterated that "That man was not great who is wealthy but he who uses his wealth to alleviate the sufferings of others is truly great." The greatest and noblest are they who serve others, and they are the real aristocrats of the world, they are the salt of the earth who enliven souls ; they are the true saviours of mankind. But for them the world would be a sorry place. Rebekah's services to the helpless will always evoke not only the admiration but blessings of her fellow-beings. She gladly and willingly surrendered her belongings for the good of others and rendered valuable aid to her fellow creatures. If Rebekah wanted, she could have easily decked herself with ten to twenty thousand rupees worth of jewellery but she was satisfied with a single pair of bangles valued at not more than three or four hundred rupees. She was a woman of extraordinary modesty and simplicity.

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## HELP TO HER HUSBAND.

*“Work is the best thing to make us love life”—Renan.*

*In love of home the love of country has its rise—Dickens.*

Her husband received a great incentive in the literary field after Rebekah had passed out from the Grant Medical College. His lectures and writings multiplied fast and gained an immense popularity. He toured throughout the districts of Ratnagiri, Nasik, Khandesh and Ahmednagar and delivered various lectures. A bright idea struck him, and he said to himself, that if his wife's little help could popularise his lectures so much it could be a boon to the public if he himself joined the Medical College and studied the medical subjects. He made known his desire to his wife, who encouraged his idea. He was then forty years old and father of eight children. He interviewed Dr. H. V. Carter, Principal of Medical College, with the intention of joining it. The latter on learning the object of Mr. Simeon was to simply gain knowledge and not to earn a living, replied that he never came across a student with such uncommon ambition. He pointed out that since Mr. Simeon had not passed the Matriculation Examination, the rules required him to pay a very stiff sum for attending lectures. Rebekah without hesitation, was willing to pay any price to gratify her husband's wish. Mr. Simeon proposed to his wife that he would rent a room near the College,

deeming it impossible to concentrate his mind on his studies and live at the same time with his family. It was a hard task to segregate himself from his wife and children, but he saw the benefit of it and resolved to follow the course. He left instructions that he was only to be disturbed in the event of serious illness in the family.

It was a moment of great reflection to him. He thanked his star when the sad scene of his boyhood presented itself to him. He thought how strange were the ways of destiny. There was a time when he could hardly pay a monthly school fee of annas two in the Robert Money Institution and Principal Mr. Galbreath had to keep him as a free student. But times had changed. He now cheerfully paid a large sum of money monthly without feeling the least inconvenience, and spent as great a sum on his high-priced books. If Simeon wished he could have practised as a doctor and made his fortune. He was offered a lucrative post in an enlightened Native State but he declined.

After finishing the college course, Simeon engaged the services of two clerks, one vernacular, the other English, and set the work of preparing simple and suitable lectures by working hard and keeping late nights. He sent for expensive books, maps, charts, etc. from England and America and continued the work for years, while Rebekah financed him to fulfil his aspirations. In fact, she entered into his project with all her heart and soul, and took keen interest in his lectures. It was a treat to the public to hear Simeon's scientific lectures delivered in so

simple and impressive a language. Men, women, and children flocked to hear him. It was something uncommon but instructive to them. He was welcomed everywhere in the Bombay Presidency owing to his popular lectures, and received invitations galore.

It was a great consolation to Rebekah and her husband to learn that the people appreciated Simeon's lectures, and they felt amply rewarded for their labours. He suffered a great deal during his lecturing tours to out of the way places, owing to caste prejudices but he faced them boldly to accomplish his object. Simeon had a habit of bathing sometimes twice daily, but while on tour he had to do without it for three or four days at a time. His Hindu hosts had no secluded places for baths as they all bathe in the open. Once he had an occasion to go to Malvan to deliver his lecture in the midst of which his voice grew hoarse. He asked for a glass of water and his request could not be complied with as Simeon's drinking water in their copper or brass bowl would have rendered the vessel unfit for further use owing to its pollution. On repeating his request a man was sent to a katcheri about a couple of miles distant to fetch a glass and the unfortunate speaker had to wait for more than an hour before he could have a sip. Such scores of caste restrictions often came in his way. An editor of a Vernacular paper on hearing the incident strongly criticised their indiscrete action in not sacrificing a metal bowl worth a few annas instead of sending a servant all that distance for a glass and allowing the speaker to

suffer the pangs of thirst. Another instance of stretching the boundaries of caste imagination would not be out of place here.

Through the inadvertency of the educational committee, some love poems of renowned poets meant for advanced scholars crept in the Standard Books which Mr. Simeon took an exception to, and he appealed to the authorities to eliminate them from the later editions on the ground that they were likely to have deleterious effects on children and to substitute moral and instructive ones in their stead. He delivered a number of lectures in their condemnation in the school books without accusing their authors. This action brought forth criticism from the public, and gave rise to a great deal of commotion. The majority of public opinion was with Simeon. One of the conservative newspapers poured out its vials of wrath and remarked that holy poems of the Hindu poets were desecrated by the unholy touch of this Jewish gentleman. Simeon wrote out a scathing reply and read it out to his wife. Though convinced of its arguments she advised her husband to drop the controversy and allow the matter to defend itself on its own merits.

Simeon's various lectures were the talk of the town. He once spoke at Nagpur before a very large audience in connection with the society for the protection of cows, and was applauded very much.

An influential gentleman seized the opportunity of hinting to Simeon that were he to sell tickets for his lectures he would have packed houses and make his fortune. Simeon delivered several lectures on

delicate subjects before the high class Brahmin ladies and gentlemen, and handled them in a masterly manner, using chaste language and without the least touch of indecency about them.

The main spring of his activities was his wife, who encouraged him and supplied funds for his travels from place to place to deliver lectures. She spared no pains to see her husband as comfortable as possible during his tours, and spent the greater portion of her earnings for this noble cause.

At this juncture of his lecturing fame, plague broke out in Bombay and the surrounding places, and thousands of people fell victims. The epidemic put a sudden bar to Simeon's tours, but his thirst for promoting knowledge was insatiable. He thought of a new plan to popularise his lectures more widely. He suggested to his wife that they should buy a printing press, publish his lectures and sell them at normal prices. To keep up passionate zeal for lectures, and the fire of his oratory burning, he decided to build a lecture hall on the vacant ground adjoining their house and succeeded in accomplishing his object, an account of which will appear later on.

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## SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING MORALS.

*“Not what I have, but what I do, is my kingdom”—Carlyle.*

In the year 1882, Simeon by the advice of his mother, who was ever ready to co-operate in all his noble projects, and with the help and collaboration of his wife, started the above society in Bombay with several branches in the town as well as in the mofussil.

In the beginning two or three friends attended the first few meetings but soon their enthusiasm waned. This did not deter Simeon from his purpose. He was determined to push on whether he had an audience or not. He devised a clever method to attract the public and adhere to punctuality by arranging that his mother should preside at every meeting himself acting as the lecturer and his wife the audience. This remarkable procedure of the undaunted trio soon wrought a wonderful influence and brought large numbers to his meetings. Simeon's earnestness and determination to wait for no man, however great, had the desired effect.

The society's fame spread like wild fire. It educated the general public in different subjects—moral social, religious, hygienic, temperance etc. bringing out in a short time great speakers and thinkers, causing a great awakening in the Bombay Presidency and changing the trend of the country's thought.

The birth of the society may be looked upon as an epoch-making period. It sowed the seed of revolu-



**REBEKAH'S FAMILY GROUP**



tion in religious thought, sharpened wits to common sense ; and championed everything that was good, true and noble.

It was the first society that took interest in the depressed classes, and gave them education by opening night schools, and helping them in every way. It broke the religious shackles and set many free from a contaminated atmosphere. It grew into a tremendous power moulding the character of the people. To the rigidly orthodox it became a terror. Its watchword was morality. It followed reason as its guiding factor ; thousands became its admirers and entered its fold unsolicited.

The cause that led to its formation was this :— One day Simeon pondered seriously over the question of religion ; he knew that the hatred of man against man was due to the number of different religions, sects and opinions in the world. To destroy this destructive spirit and create in its stead peace, love and harmony, he laid the foundation of this society on the broad principle of toleration. It took its stand on the sacred doctrine—‘love one another.’

To enter the shrine—the passport for its devotees was *morality*, be they Hindus, Mahomedans, Jews, Christians, Parsees or Buddhists. The Society preached that man is independent to act as he thought so far as religion is concerned, but he is not independent to behave as he pleases where morality is in question. He was bound to the Society for its preservation. Its violation caused the disturbance of peace and happiness. In short religion

is a question of individuality, while morality is a question of universality. The society delivered a series of lectures all over the country for the propagation of its doctrines.

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**REBEKAH'S LECTURE HALL**  
**OR**  
**TEMPLE OF HYGIENE**

*“Seek Wisdom”—King Solomon.*

Finding the people of her country in gross ignorance in the knowledge of Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene, Rebekah built the hall at her own expense to diffuse knowledge. People of all castes and creeds attended the meetings. Instruction was imparted to females not only how to bring up infants and children but also on other useful subjects. A separate gallery was erected and set apart for the females who were averse to sitting in the same hall with men. Her husband was impressed with the importance and gravity of the above subjects and devoted himself to these as well as discourses on food, drink, cleanliness, the evil effects of early marriage etc. He often tackled the question of superstition, blind faith and adherence to old notions of men and things and enlightened his hearers to the modern views based on

science and reason. During his last lecturing tour in the Konkan, the Deccan, Berar and the Central Provinces, so great was the interest shown by the audience that he received spontaneous outbursts of applause and they specially requested him to deliver the same lectures which he had delivered before on Hygiene in all its bearings on social and other subjects to their females, whose anxiety and curiosity were roused and who were anxious to get an insight, amongst other things, into the principles and practice of nursing ; the precautions needed at the time of maternity ; the proper management of infants and children ; and into other cognate subjects. The Lecture Hall within the short time of a few weeks became very popular. Young men as well as old, after office hours, instead of taking some kind of re-creation flocked to the Hall and crowded it to its utmost capacity, so much so, that even the steps and windows were packed with the listeners, such was the enthusiasm of the people for the lectures ! In order that the audience might understand these scientific lectures properly—charts, diagrams, and moveable atlases for the purpose of illustration were hung on the walls and made use of by the lecturer. Various medical and hygienic appliances necessary for the purpose were ordered at enormous cost from England, France, Germany and America and kept in the Hall.

The ceremony of opening the Hall took place on Thursday, the 16th of November 1899, in the presence of a large gathering of European and Indian ladies and gentlemen. The Right Rev.

James MacArthur, D.D., Lord Bishop of Bombay, presided.

His Lordship after declaring the Hall open spoke as follows :—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I am sure we must all feel that Mr. and Mrs. Walker are to be congratulated on having accomplished a valuable enterprise in the building of this Hall. It is a Hall which must secure our good opinion, and from the first impression which we form of it, it seems to be in itself a kind of object lesson of the principles which it is intended to be the means of teaching. It is a spacious and well-furnished Hall, it is a well-lighted, and, I am certain, a well ventilated Hall. In that respect, it compares very favourably with the Town Hall, in which I spent two hours this afternoon at the famine meeting ; and the atmosphere of which I found to be anything but exhilarating. This Hall is free from the imperfect ventilation of the Town Hall, and we have been able to spend here a very pleasant evening, listening to the interesting address which Mr. Walker has just given us. I think we all must have been interested in the history which Mr. Walker has given of himself and of his work. He desired to convey useful information on various topics to the people of this land, and knowing the value of the work he was doing, he, at a late period of his life, became a student at the Grant Medical College, where he studied the principles of Hygiene, which from the experience he had in lecturing he found to be the most valuable subject of any. It was very meritorious

that he should have become a student at his time of life. He has had his reward in the appreciation with which his lectures have been received. There is now a greater reward for him in the building of this Hall. The Hall I understand has been built at the expense of Mrs. Walker, and I believe the sum expended on building amounts to about Rs, 10,000, or more. Mr. Walker was too modest to mention this outlay himself, but I think, it is proper that I should allude to it in order that you may be made aware of the expenses that have been incurred and of the sacrifices that have been made in erecting this building, and that you may be acquainted with the value of the work which Mr. Walker has been doing for many years in furthering these lectures. He has gone on doing this useful work, and the lady has been able to signify her appreciation of her husband's labours by building this Hall. Not only is this Hall an exceedingly suitable building for the purposes for which it is designed but it is admirably furnished with charts and diagrams, which compare most favourably with those I have seen elsewhere. With their assistance Mr. Walker will be able to give most valuable lectures on anatomical and other subjects. The subject which Mr. Walker has chosen as the principal one to be taught is that of Hygiene. It is of the utmost importance that we should all be made acquainted with the principles of hygiene. It is only in recent years that courses of lectures, similar to those which Mr. Walker has been giving, have been commenced in such a great centre of intelligence as London. I remember the time when there were no

such lectures, and when the people had no opportunities of receiving such instruction. The progress made in London has been rapid, and there is now a growing desire on the part of the people to obtain such knowledge. In the case of the people of this country a knowledge of hygiene is specially important. This country is one that is affected by a great variety of sorrows. Life is not long. Sickness is very frequent and there is a great deal of misery ; but it is capable of being averted by the application of those principles which Mr. Walker intends to teach. You must know that life in other countries where these principles are better understood is much longer, healthier and consequently happier than in this land. When one has attained the age of fifty years in India, I believe I am right in saying one is called a *buddha*, and is looked upon as an old man. In England, when one has attained that age he is looked upon only as having arrived at years of discretion.

I am afraid that there is a very injurious conviction in the minds of the people of this country, a conviction that every thing is determined by fate. They think that you cannot be more healthy under any circumstances than God intends you to be, that you cannot live longer, whatever you may do but just as long as He intends. That is the kind of fatalism which I believe has been a factor in the religious belief of the people of this country. I hope the day will come when they will see that fatalism is a mistaken belief altogether. It is true that the will of God is supreme, yet God works through known laws, and places upon us the responsibility of acquainting

ourselves with the principles which regulate health, and which make life what it should be, and which develop its capabilities. If we have the opportunities for acquiring knowledge of the laws of health and we do not use them and turn them to good account, it is a false idea to suppose that God will save us from the consequences, for God only helps those who help themselves. If we ignore the laws which He has established, and refuse to obey them, then it is a mistake to suppose that He will save us from the consequences of our actions. I trust we shall learn to observe the laws of health which Mr. Walker intends to teach. "Hygiene" to some of you must be a difficult name, but the kind of knowledge it represents is very simple. For example, it is one of the necessities of health that we should have good food, and it should be well cooked, for upon the cooking of the food depends its capability of being digested and its action on the human system. For that reason it is important that our meals should be well cooked, and that we should understand the principles of cookery. A good deal of my time in England was given to organising cookery classes in our board schools. A man can escape a great many evil physical consequences if his meals are well cooked, because they affect his whole system and become a source of strength to the body instead of a source of weakness. Another great necessity to health is good air ; and I am afraid the people of this country, have considerable objection to breathing good air. It will be necessary for them to overcome that objection before their health can be improved.

There is a great desire on the part of the people in this country and in Bombay itself, to sleep in close rooms and in foul air. A short time ago I had occasion to visit some of the new chawls which are being built in Bombay, and which are almost as good as the Peabody Buildings in England. They are excellently provided with ventilation, but I found the people living in them had used their dirty clothes and their blankets to stop up the windows and ventilators, in order to keep out the pure air, and to get the luxury of sleeping in the kind of atmosphere to which they had become accustomed. If there is to be an improvement in the physical health of the people of this country it is necessary they should hear Mr. Walker, and be made to understand the advantages of good air. Nothing thrives in the darkness. It is light which gives strength and happiness to all living things. If you put a bird in a case and keep it covered up, the bird will never sing. I have observed in this country that quite a number of the ladies are very pale. A lady friend of mine told me, before I came to Bombay that I should soon lose my colour; but I am of opinion that I am still as healthy-looking as when I left my own country. I have come to the conclusion that the reason why especially the women are so pale is because they live too much in the darkness. They lie in bed in the morning, and only take their exercise in the evening after the sun has gone down, so that they get no sunlight at all. That I think explains why they have such pale faces. If they would do as I do, and get on their bicycles at seven o'clock in the

morning, and go for a ride along the sea front they would breathe the fresh air from the ocean and would preserve their natural complexions. That is one of the laws of nature, and I hope the day will come when the various classes of this country will see the advantage of having windows in their houses. Mr. Walker will prove that doctrine by Hygiene, and will put you in possession of the principles by which health may be maintained and vigour increased, and by which you may be able to develop your minds and fulfil the duties of life which God has intended for you. I need not add anything to these observations.

I am glad to have been present here this evening as this is a unique enterprise in Bombay, and I am not aware that there is anything corresponding to it elsewhere. Mr. and Mrs. Walker are entitled to the greatest possible credit, and I trust that they may be rewarded by seeing a great improvement in the sanitary conditions affecting Bombay, and thereby an improvement in the health of the city. Then we shall get rid of the plague which has existed among us for so many years, and also get rid of other types of sickness. Plague has continued for years because of the insanitary conditions of our city, and what we want to do is to improve sanitation. A beginning has been made in the inauguration of the scheme for the rebuilding of parts of Bombay in which many of us took part a few days ago. We need to impress people everywhere—for at present they do not see it—with the necessity and usefulness of sanitary improvement. They resist the measures that are suggested,

and seem to be contented to live under the same conditions that have been passed down to them by their fathers from generation to generation. But I hope that the effects of the knowledge which is likely to be conveyed to them in this Hall may work like leaven, and slowly effect a change. The beginning of all great improvements must be small, and what we require in the present instance is to secure a recognition of the value of what will be taught here, and then we shall work a great reform. If we build up good opinion, in the end we shall accomplish great results. That I feel sure is what Mr. and Mrs. Walker are trying to do, and in that work I am sure we all wish them God-speed. I believe the object must have your hearty appreciation, and I hope that you will indicate that appreciation by coming here in large numbers yourselves, and by making your opinion known to your friends, and by doing all you can to co-operate with Mr. Walker, and to assist him in his valuable work ( Applause ).

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At the conclusion of the Bishop's address, Mr. David Gostling, F. R. I., B. A., & F. S. A., Architect, and Colonel T. A. Freeman addressed the meeting.

Mr. Gostling said :—My Lord President, Ladies and Gentlemen—I received a card of invitation to be present this evening. Before coming I used my best endeavours to ascertain for what purpose this “Hall of Literature, Science and Hygiene” had been instituted. To say nothing of its first two objects, its

third object "Hygiene" has so many meanings attached to it in this utilitarian age, that I could not gather what work was proposed to be done. I had not seen any reference to it in the newspapers. I inquired of my European and Native friends, and especially of my office clerks who live in this neighbourhood, but no one had heard anything about it or could give me any information concerning it. I therefore determined to come, to see and hear for myself what was being done or proposed to be done, attracted as I was by the fact that your Lordship our Bishop was to preside, and that any cause to which you were to give the sanction of your presence must be a good cause, and worthy of support.

Having come, while hearing Dr. S. B. Walker in his address give a statement of the work in which he has been for so many years engaged, and hearing your Lordship express your hearty sympathy in this work, and dilate upon the all importance of a knowledge of hygiene in the city, the home, and the body I must confess to an increasing feeling throughout the evening of—shall I say?—delighted wonderment at this new centre of teaching so suddenly grown up in our midst. This new lecture Hall, though not very large, is handsome in its proportions and general appearance, and it evidences throughout a full measure of loving thought and careful attention to detail in its design and working out. Its acoustic properties are excellent, while its ventilation, and the general feeling of coolness and comfort pervading it are more than good. I am especially pleased with the large educational charts of the anatomy of the human

frame which are hung upon the walls, with the pictorial and other charts in praise of total abstinence from alcoholic liquors, as evidencing that Dr. Walker is not merely earnest in advocating the practice of those improved methods of living which are needed to keep our bodies in good health, but that he intends also to denounce and prove the evil consequences of those fashionable practices relating to so-called stimulants which modern society finds so terribly difficult to break away from.

It is evident that Dr. Walker, the moving spirit of this new educational Institute, is no ordinary man; he believes he has a mission in the world, and that that mission is to teach the value of hygiene in all its many phases to those among whom his lot has been cast. He has informed us that in the furtherance of his mission, and long after the usual period of study, he found it necessary to study medicine in the Grant Medical College. In the providence of God, he has found in his good lady one able and willing to help him in bringing his ideas into fruition, and now we may hope and believe that they will together in due course reap the reward of their labours by persuading and educating the people of Bombay to adopt the practice of all the hygienic virtues. (Hear, hear.)

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COLONEL FREEMAN said—When I came to this meeting I had no idea of making a speech; but Dr. Walker has asked me for a few words, so perhaps I may say something that occurred to me while I was

listening to Dr. Walker and our Chairman. This Hall is, we have been told, to spread the knowledge of hygiene, that is, of the principles of healthy living, in the homes of the people of Bombay, and we shall all, I am sure, be agreed that this is a most useful aim. But if it is to have any practical effect it must be operative inside the homes of the people. Now who is it who rules inside the Hindu household ? Is it not the women of the family ?—the old mothers ? And they are terribly conservative, and will not have any changes. Those amongst the Hindus who have tried to introduce reforms have found themselves more than once baffled by the power of the women of their households. Now it is true, that you, my Hindu brethren, have some things to learn from us Europeans in the matter of healthy living in your homes ; but I am afraid that it will be of very little use for Dr. and Mrs. Walker to give you *men* only good lectures in this Hall if your efforts to carry out the changes which those lectures advise are thwarted by the women of your households, and I do hope that Dr. and Mrs. Walker will find some means of reaching and influencing the young women and girls, so that those who in a few years will rule the homes in Bombay may be prepared to accept a healthy mode of living. It is an immense task to reach the women of this great city, but it will have to be done if any real progress is to be made. I am very glad, therefore, to see that Dr. and Mrs. Walker have in their future programme to deliver lectures to females in their own language on various subjects useful to them, and I hope the people of different

communities will gladly send their females to those lectures, and will be largely benefited by them.

And there is another point to be considered. In learning from us Westerns I hope you will learn wisely. There is much, as our Chairman has told us, that you may well copy from us in the matter of light and air in your dwellings ; but there are other points in which you had better stick to your own customs. One of those is the use of Alcohol ; I hope you will not learn that from us. It may not, if taken in moderation, do us Europeans much harm ; we are accustomed to the use of it by the habit of centuries ; but even so, I do not know that it does us much good. I myself have been a teetotaler for nearly twenty years ; but for you who have never been accustomed to it, total abstinence is the wisest thing. And again in the matter of cooking I am not sure that you have anything to learn from us. You have excellent teeth, and I am much inclined to attribute that to your manner of preparing your food.

But in the matter of Light and Air you cannot do better than follow our Chairman's advice.

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A Meeting of the Marathi Speaking people of Bombay was held under the presidency of the Hon. Mr. Justice M. G. Ranade, M. A., L. L. B., C. I. E., on Saturday, the 2nd December 1899, to explain to the public in Marathi the aims and objects of the Hall when a large number of ladies and gentlemen were present.

Rao Saheb G. M. Sathe, B. A., Justice of the Peace, in his opening speech said :—

This splendid and well-decorated Hall, in which we have gathered to-day, is built by Dr. S. B. Walker and his wife, Mrs. Rebekah Walker. Dr. Walker is a man of great renown and has done this work in a disinterested manner for the good of his fellow creatures. He has received English and Vernacular letters of congratulation and encouragement from several gentlemen. I beg to read to you some of the Vernacular letters only, as an evidence of his popularity in the Moffussil and their good wishes for the success of the Institution. I need not read the English letters as they already appear in the account of the Inauguration Ceremony of the Hall.

The reason, why I have read out to you, so many extracts, is to give you at least, some idea, of the extent of Dr. Walker's labours, and of how much his efforts are appreciated by the people in the Moffussil. The designation of this Hall, the "Temple of Hygiene," is very appropriate. Several people build, with religious motives, temples and dedicate them to the gods Rama, Vishnu, Ganapati, and other deities. Similarly Dr. Walker has built this Hall, and dedicated it, so to say, to the Goddess of Health. The presiding Deity of this Temple—Hall—is Health. And it is here that this Goddess is to be worshipped, and adored. It is not necessary, of course, that she should be worshipped actually with scents and flowers. The real worship consists in the exertions for her service with true and cordial devotion. Healthiness among our people is greatly

wantning. Now-a-days more persons die in an early age than in former times. Very few people, advanced in age, are to be found in these days ; the reason of all this is the neglect and the want of proper care for health. The importance of health is so great that it can hardly be described in a summary way. If a man is healthy, he will enjoy a happy life. But it is quite contrary in the case of one who has not good health. Such persons die in an early age. Generally, very few persons know the importance of health. For example, a good many learned men have gathered here in this Hall, but very few of them know well the principles of hygiene. One that studies the Science of Medicine has also to study hygiene ; but it is not compulsory for those that take up Arts course, Legal line and so on. Since this subject is not prescribed for the B. A., Intermediate, P. E., and Matriculation Examinations, so far as the University is concerned, there is no necessity of studying it except for that of the Public Service, where the students have to go through a small book on this subject *viz.*, "Sanitary Primer." Very few people have definite ideas as regards why one should take a bath, what and how much or why one should eat and drink. Some religions have prescribed certain rules for all this, but even those are not observed; because belief in religion has disappeared. The healthiness of the mind is of as great an importance and necessity as that of the body. Since mind and body have to act in harmony with each other, both of them must always be kept in healthy condition. Several lessons bearing on the importance of this

useful subject should be introduced in the books used in the Educational Department. The formation of our mind and disposition depends upon the food we take. The disposition of man is classified under three heads ; *viz*, Satvika *i. e.* quality endowed with genuine goodness, Rajas *i. e.* quality endowed with passion, and Tamas *i. e.* quality affected by darkness or ignorance. These three qualities are well treated and explained in Bhagwat-Gita. It seems to me that the qualities formed from drinking the milk of a cow, a buffalo, an ass, a sheep etc. are different from those which are formed from the nourishment of the milk of the mother's breast.

In this Hall, the subject of hygiene alone is not to be explained and discussed, but also lectures bearing on various subjects such as Morality, Ennoblement of the Soul etc. will be delivered. Dr. Walker has already prepared and written nearly three hundred lectures on these subjects which he has been kind enough to show me. In addition to this, he has an independent printing press ready for use. These beautifully printed leaflets and handbills in our hands have been printed by him in his own press.

Dr. Walker is a man of unselfish and peculiarly philanthropic character. Very rarely do we find men endowed with such qualities. If there be any at all, they first provide for their families and then spend the remaining wealth, if left at all—probably nothing remains—for the good of others. But quite different is the case with this gentleman—Dr. Walker. Without providing for his own family, he has applied

all his energy and wealth to this Hall for the welfare of the public.

In this work of philanthropy, Dr. Walker is greatly assisted by his wife, Mrs. Rebekah Walker. Her virtue, her duty and her affection towards her husband, and other good qualities of her liberal and noble mind are clearly proved by the fact that she has handed over to our brother—Dr. Walker, the greater part of the wealth she had earned, to be utilized for the purpose of diffusing useful knowledge among the people. The town, the country and the community which are endowed with such noble-hearted saints are, indeed, very blessed. Now there remains only one thing to be mentioned ; namely, we should give Dr. Walker at least some help in return. So it is the duty of every one of us, to subscribe to at least one copy of the lecture which he is going to get published and to request our friends and relations also to subscribe to the same.

Shrimant Babasaheb Sangliker, a Sirdar from the Sangli State, said:—

We all are highly obliged to Dr. and Mrs. Walker for their philanthropic undertaking in building this excellent Hall for the purpose of imparting useful knowledge to the people of this country. I was also present at the inauguration ceremony of this Hall. I heartily congratulate this worthy couple on their noble enterprise and wish every success for their noble undertaking.

Sir Bhalchandra Krishna, Kt., a physician of eminence and great renown, said :—

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,—The object of our gathering here to-day has been well explained by Rao Saheb Sathe, Shrimant Sardar Sangalikar and the founder of the Hall—our esteemed Dr. Walker. It is not necessary for me to repeat the same. I shall however say that there was a great want amongst our people of such a Hall ; but that long-left want has been removed by the labours and endeavours of Dr. Walker. The want of such an institution, though not in all parts of India, was much felt in the Bombay Presidency. There are many societies, great and small, and of various sorts, in Bombay, Poona, and in many other towns and villages ; but since there is not a single society or institution founded upon this principle, the want of such a one, was indeed felt very much, and we should all thank Dr. Walker for his having supplied the same. We have now got an excellent opportunity of having in one place all sorts of scientific instructions with experiments. Rao Saheb Sathe has already remarked that men usually acquire wealth for their own requirements, and devote some of the remaining portion, if left at all, to the benefit of others ; but there are few men to be found, who have the virtue of providing others with means to enable the people to acquire the knowledge of useful sciences. With regard to this noble enterprise, there is one particular thing, worth mentioning and learning from the present example by all, which is that the wife, who is

her husband's better-half, has given him the power of utilising the wealth, acquired by her, for beneficent purposes. I have for a long time been acquainted with Mrs. Rabekah Walker. I know her philanthropic character well enough. Clever and well experienced as she is, in her profession, she has amassed wealth, which she handed over, of her own accord, to Dr. Walker, to be utilised for benevolent purposes. This act of hers clearly displays her true affection towards her husband, her zeal for work and her liberality. All of us should sincerely thank her for having set before the public an example of a true and affectionate wife. Though there were and still are several well educated men, there was no place, where an arrangement could be made for them to deliver lectures with experiments so as to impress the same on the minds of the people. Besides, out of the many learned among us, very few are well versed in sciences ; but for this they are not to be blamed. It is the fault of the University which has the control over and the direction of all this. The suggestions, Rao Saheb Sathe has made to us, are indeed, worth considering. Dr. Walker is as industrious and ardent a lover of knowledge as he is philanthropic. After he had passed the fortieth year of his age,—when he was the father of eight children,—he joined the Grant Medical College here, and studied there with determination, mainly for the purpose of spreading the knowledge of hygiene etc. among the public. After his college course was over, instead of adhering to his Medical profession, he spent his life in delivering and

writing lectures and has made up his mind to continue his life in such laudable enterprises alone. If we take all this into our consideration, it will be quite plain to us, that his labours are of no mean calculation and that his unselfishness and disinterestedness are of no ordinary character. Fourteen years have elapsed since Dr. Walker left the College and if he had since then passed his life in the Medical Profession, he would have earned hundreds of Rupees per month.

It is, indeed, praiseworthy that among other subjects, Physiology and Hygiene in particular, are going to be studied in this Hall. For even many of the educated men do not know the correct position of the heart, stomach or the liver in the body. The usual knowledge of many extends to show, by laying their hand on the left side of the abdomen, the position of the liver, which is on the right side. They never consider, even in a dream, about their food, sleep etc. A great many men have, in the first place, no liking for such subjects ; and if they have it at all, they have no means of studying them. In order to remove this want, Dr. Walker has determined to publish small pamphlets on such subjects in order to diffuse knowledge, by circulating them broad-cast amongst the public. I heartily join Rao Saheb Sathe, in his suggestion that we all should render every possible help to Dr. Walker. Some men, in small groups of ten or fifteen, instead of wasting their time in clubs, or in playing at cards, as we generally see, will be greatly benefited if they spend at least an hour or two of their leisure in

acquiring knowledge in this Hall. To the clerks and merchants this place will be of great advantage. No one has henceforward any cause to complain that there is no place nor means to acquire knowledge of such subjects. In conclusion, therefore, I beg to say that all of us should earnestly thank Dr. and Mrs. Walker for this noble and liberal enterprise.

**Rao Saheb Abasaheb Kolhatkar, Justice of the Peace, said:—**

From the time hygiene has been in disuse among us, our general inclination has been to go to Doctors. Our people have hardly any occasion to acquire the knowledge of hygiene except what they get from small books prescribed for the V. Standard. Since it is known to all that Doctors study hygiene as part of their course, the tendency of the people has been towards them. As there are now many Doctors, every one runs to them for treatment. But now-a-days, as the people are getting poor, they cannot every now and then consult a Doctor. There was no institution wherein our people could get such knowledge. But this want has now been removed by Mrs. Walker for which all of us should give her our cordial thanks. Our people will, indeed, be benefited, if they only take the trouble of coming here and attending the lectures. When they will gradually learn something of this science, in course of time, they will have an opportunity of imparting it in their turn, to their friends and so on. And as has already been observed by gentlemen like Rao Saheb Sathe and Sir Bhalchandra, this Institution will

greatly add to our happiness. We are highly obliged to Mrs. Walker for having established this Hall. We should lend a helping hand to this Institution, both bodily and mentally.

Rao Bahadur G. N. Nadkarni, B.A., L.L. B., Justice of the Peace, said:—

Many people build inns, temples &c., but this is the first Hall of its kind built mainly for the purpose of imparting knowledge to the public. We shall learn a good deal here how to improve our families ; we should one and all thank Dr. and Mrs. Walker for having provided us with such means. I am much pleased to hear Rao Saheb Sathe, who tells us that Dr. Walker has prepared a large Series of Lectures which will give us useful information as to how we shall be able to keep ourselves and our children healthy and avoid attacks of diseases. Dr. Walker deserves our cordial and sincere thanks since he has taken the trouble of teaching these scientific principles to the people in the Moffusil and has built this Hall here for the same purpose. We should all help him in the Series of Lectures he has intended to deliver.

The President in his speech, among other things, said as follows:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,—Dr. Walker has travelled extensively in the country and has acquired a good deal of information and earned great renown. His efforts being purely philanthropic, he has received so many congratulatory and encouraging letters, some

extracts of which are already read to us by Rao Saheb Sathe at the very commencement of the meeting. He has already nearly three hundred lectures written by himself ; he has built this excellent Hall for delivering lectures and he has also got ready a small but pretty museum. Notwithstanding all these provisions for gaining knowledge, it would be a pity, if we are found wanting in wisdom so as not to avail ourselves of the advantage and to do something in return for his benevolent acts. Blessed, indeed, will be the day when it comes. It is exceedingly pleasing and praiseworthy that Dr. Walker labours for the coming of such a day. Who will not be gratified to see the strong determination of both the husband and the wife to bring the people round to the right path of knowledge, by going from house to house and clearly explaining to them the objects of the Institution and requesting them to attend the lectures delivered in this Hall ? Indeed, the persons who have given up themselves to such benevolent actions are saints.

About two thousand years ago, there lived in Greece a Saint of Dr. Walker's type. His only profession was, it may fairly be said, of preaching. When ever he met a man on the way, he used to ask him what his desire was. On his being told that it was for money, he questioned him again, how much he wanted it. When he would reply that he required just enough for his maintenance, the saint would say, "Why do you strive so much for it ? Will you not be benefited if you spend the same energy in ennobling your soul ?" Similarly the saint used to put similar

questions to other persons whenever he happened to see them ; and if they replied that they craved for fame, the great saint would again ask him "Fame of what kind ?" When they would answer, "Fame of Valour," he would then interrupt them by putting such questions as "What is meant by valour" and so on. By so doing, the saint was always trying to bring people to the path of virtue and would never leave any one, he came in contact with, until the man was thoroughly convinced of his mistake and brought to right reason. Finally, on account of the various false charges that were brought against this saint, he had to end his life by swallowing poison.

Dr. Walker's endeavours also seem to me just similar to those of this great saint. What greater benevolence can there be than that of going to the houses of the people and giving them the knowledge they so sadly need. Again also, who is there that will not desire health ? But every one is accustomed to put off the time of acquiring health as distant as possible. Such vague notion that something will happen by obeying or disobeying the rules of health five or ten years hence won't do with the people ; they want what they can get to-day. It is not that the people do not do certain things because they do not know their importance, but that they avoid doing them negligently, and put them off as much as possible. No one can now find an excuse to say that he has no means of acquiring scientific knowledge. The clerks as well as other persons who, owing to some inconvenience or other are not in a position to get such education, will be greatly benefited, if they

attend this Hall at least one hour a day. The present undertaking is not one man's business. All those that will take the advantage of learning here should try to teach the same to others. In England, learned men of this type only are trying to accomplish the same object in connection with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. During the period of their leisure, they go from village to village and impart to all people the knowledge they have acquired. Quite similar does the determination of this gentleman seem to be. He has made up his mind to visit offices, chawls (buildings in which large number of families live), villages and other places to give lectures and show the path of knowledge to both—men and women. It is the duty of every one to do something in return for his exertions. We should come here from time to time to hear the lectures delivered, and buy them when published and help him in giving knowledge to our brethren. Mere desires or blessings are of no avail. It is no wonder that all of us are so delighted to see this Mandir-hall, that will be the means of acquiring knowledge by both men and women. I once more give my heartfelt thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Walker.

On the 26th of March 1900, Her Excellency Lady Northcote accompanied by Mrs. Mac Arthur paid a visit to the Institute and was very much pleased with the Hall and the various anatomical and physiological charts and diagrams and moveable atlases, hygienic and other instruments. She listened with great interest to the aims and objects of the Institute.

Female students from obstetric and gynecological hospitals attended the Institute for instruction. A series of daily lectures were delivered in the Marathi, Gujrathi, Urdu and Hindi languages by medical and other educated gentlemen belonging to the Hindu Mahomedan, Parsee, Christian and Jewish communities. It was a cosmopolitan hall of literature, science and hygiene open to all communities. To give an idea of the nature of subjects discoursed in the Hall I will name a few for the readers' information:— Digestion of Food ; the circulation of blood ; the nervous system and the brain ; Respiration and pure air ; the origin of Balbodh character ; Yog philosophy ; Indian Musical Instruments ; Technical education ; Hygiene according to the Aryan Medical science ; History of Sikh Religion ; Jain Philosophy ; Hindi as the National Language of India ; Reform in the Indian Household ; Astronomical Revolving Plates ; Malaria and the Mosquito ; Experiences relating to education ; Hygiene and the Diseases of the Respiratory organs ; Cholera, its Diagnosis and Treatment ; Hygienic Rules for Daily life according to the English and Aryan systems of Medicine ; the science and Art of Indian Music ; the History of Indian Music ; Child-Marriage ; Alcohol and its effects on the Body ; Milk supply of Bombay ; Diseases produced by bad milk, and high mortality amongst children. Diagnosis and Treatment of Diseases according to the Aryan medical science ; Barrenness or sterility in women ; True and False experiences about magical deceptions ; Mesmerism ; The Duties of Modern Physicians ; Origin and Progress of Christi-

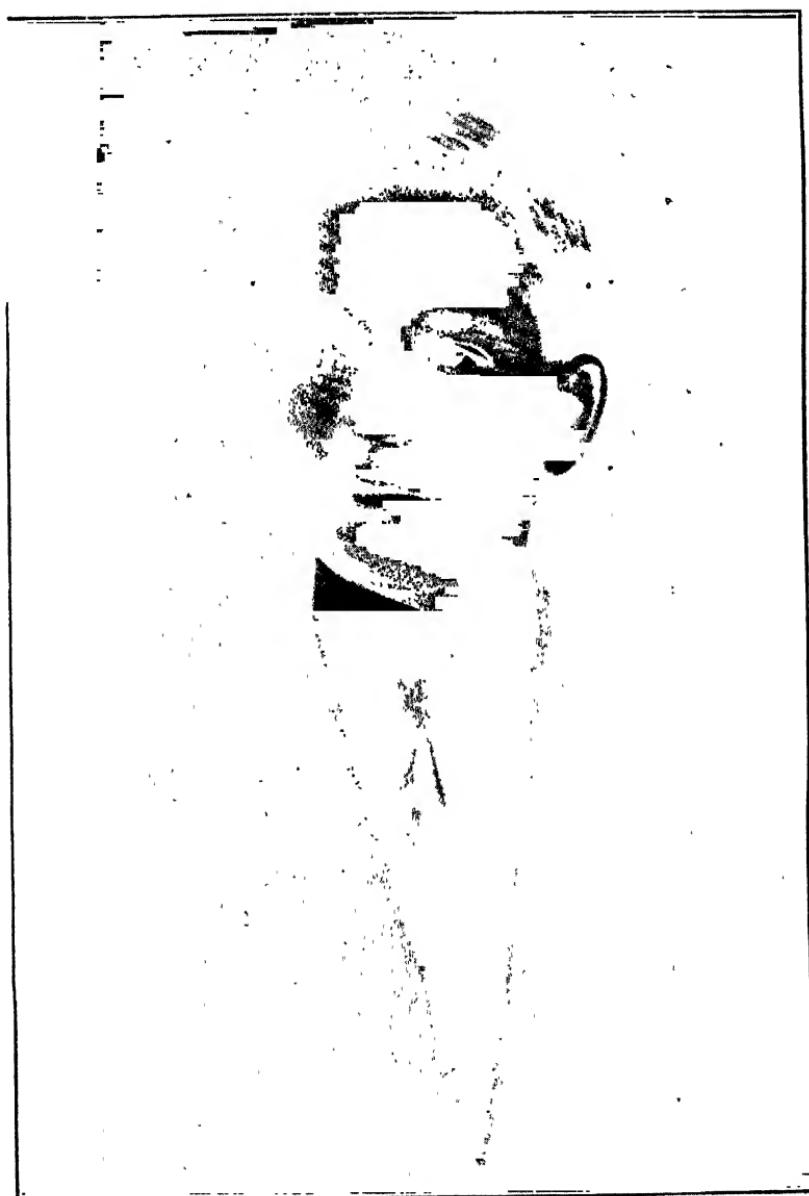
anity in India ; Chemistry and Hygiene ; Structure of the Eye and the Diseases of the Eye ; Effects of Music on the Mind ; Unity ; History of the Unani Medical Science ; What Provisions can be made for Beggars ; Female Education among Mahomedans ; the Home Sick Nursing ; The Intimate Relation between Religion and Morality ; Deceptions in the Name of Devils ; Ancient Writings of the Israelites ; Mode of Moral Instructions among Israelites ; "Tridosh" or the Three Humours of the Body, etc.

### Conflagration of the Hall.

After finishing a series of lectures in the Vernacular, arrangements were made to start an English series of lectures. Several encouraging letters were received and able speakers and writers came forward to take part in it. The Anniversary of the Hall was about to be celebrated under the Presidentship of Lord Northcote, Governor of Bombay. When, to the great misfortune of the country, Simeon's house and the Lecture Hall suddenly caught fire, consuming everything to ashes within an hour. Here was the sad end of all their activities and noble projects. When the fire broke out, all were fast asleep. Every attempt by the people outside to wake them was futile. It seemed hopeless, when a neighbour—a European gentleman—Mr. Charles Joshua King, bravely climbed the staircase, forced open the door, roused them and brought them out in their night clothes. A couple of minutes more and they would have been consumed by the flames ! No sooner had they stepped into the compound than the staircase and the whole structure gave way. It was a heart-rending sight to see their entire belongings, library, charts, life-size atlases, instruments, appliances, and what was more valuable than all these, Simeon's several years' labours, his eleven hundred manuscripts devoured by the raging fire.

A public meeting of the citizens of Bombay, under the Presidentship of the late Sir Bhalchandra Krishna Bhatvadekar was held, with the object of sending a letter of sympathy to Mrs. Rebekah Simeon Benjamin and her husband for their indescribable loss at the destruction of their home and hearth and their long years of labour.

After a time Mrs. Simeon got over their misfortune and built a one-storeyed house over the foundation of the burnt Lecture Hall and decided to erect a larger hall on the second story, when Mrs. Simeon fell seriously ill and the doctors pronounced her case hopeless. This put an end to all their ambitions and projects.



**JOHN, the eldest son.**



## Children and their Education.

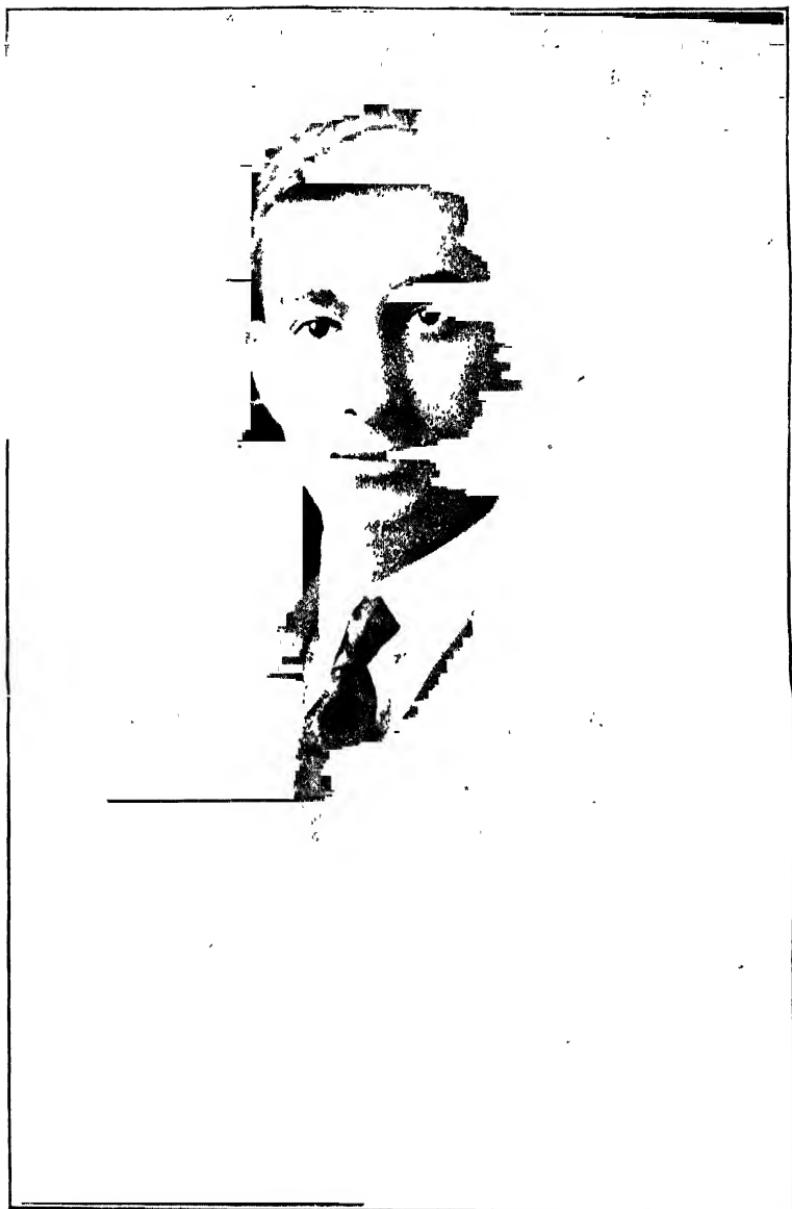
*“There is no velvet so soft as a mother’s lap, no rose so lovely as her smile, no path so flowery as that imprinted with her footsteps.”—Bishop Thomson.*

Rebekah was a typical mother. She was unremitting in her devotion to her children. She set them an example in virtue by her own life. One feels inspired by studying her remarkable career. In bringing up her children she never resorted to anger or abuse. Her manner in imparting instruction to them was full of kindness which had a marvellous effect on their characters. She was lavish in supplying funds for their education and spared no pains to see that her object was achieved. Her two daughters after passing the Matriculation examination proceeded to America for medical studies. The eldest one had undergone five years' course in the Grant Medical College of Bombay and had to study another year more to get her diploma before her departure. Her two sons, the eldest after studying up to the B.A., the other after passing the Matriculation examination, sailed for America and passed out as Electrical Engineers. Not only did Rebekah take great care in educating her children but she was equally solicitous in educating other peoples' children whom fate threw in her way. To illustrate this more fully, I will touch upon a pathetic story to show how Rebekah mothered other people's children.

**A Hindu gentleman serving in the mofussil had**

four sons and a daughter, all of whom he sent to Bombay for their education. When on leave he used to put up with his friends and relations in Bombay.

Being a man of enlightened views and opposed to superstition, he and his children were unfortunately made to suffer a great deal for their beliefs and disbeliefs. On one of these occasions he suddenly lost his two sons. This terrible calamity cast such a gloom over his life that he made known his intention of offering his children to any one who would take charge and educate them. None came forward to relieve him. Seeing his depressed condition Simeon took pity on him, broached the subject to his wife and showed an inclination to gratify the poor father's request. Apart from the expense, it was a matter of great responsibility, but Rebekah readily consented to give them home and shelter. The children, two boys and a girl, were in a very poor state of health and subject to many ailments. Her motherly care and attention soon brought them round and made fit. Within a short time they became specimens of health and vigour. Rebekah lost no time in employing a couple of tailors and provided them with a good outfit of Indian as well as English clothes. She engaged the services of teachers to instruct them at home and made up for lost time. They were made to feel quite at home and were looked after in a manner befitting a rich home. A look at their picture in this book would impress one with what Rebekah's kind heart had achieved by bestowing her love and care upon them.



**BENNY, Second son of Rebekah.**



I will now take up another incident of a similar nature.

A Hindn gentleman had a spoilt child whom he did not know how to train. He eventually made him over to Rebekah, she welcomed him to her house and soon set him right in the ways of obedience and discipline. The father's gratitude was profound and she earned it by her sweet motherly love and affection towards his son.

We have already recorded the story of the Parsee children in the previous chapter and need have no further description. Rebekah extended her sympathy far and wide to children of all nationalities—Hindus, Mahomedans, J .s and Christians. She received hundreds of letters from parents, whose children she helped pecuniarily and educated them. Such was the cosmopolitan charity of this wonderful child-reformer.

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## Rebekah's Seven Letters.

These letters are very interesting and full of instruction as their perusal will show. Worthy of note is an extract from one of her letters to her daughter Elizabeth after she had obtained the Degree of M. D. in America and secured a position as Assistant Physician and Surgeon in a hospital in Ohio State.

"I hope you will be kind and attentive to your patients in hospital and be a source of joy to them. Let their pleasure be your pleasure, their pain your pain. In a few words I say—*Treat every patient as if your own mother was under your treatment and bestow the same motherly care and affection as you would on your mother.* Train your subordinates too in the same principle. Let this thought be ever present in your mind when treating your patients."

### First Letter.

Bombay 7th July 1902.

MY DEAR GIRLS,

You left us on the 16th of April and sailed by the Italian steamer, Plorio Rubatino. Your father, your brothers John and Ben and myself had been to the Victoria Docks to wish you bon-voyage. We did not stir from the spot until your boat was out of sight. As soon as we reached home, we felt the separation very much. The place looked desolate and we can not describe how terribly we missed

you. Though we consented to your going abroad, we could not bear the thought when the time of parting arrived. Nobody but parents can realise the feeling of separation from their children at such a time. To suffer the pangs of your absence we had to convert our hearts into stones. Your brothers also miss you a great deal. However much I may feel your absence, I picture the abundant joy that will be mine on your successful return

I received your first letter from Aden mentioning the politeness of the sailors and other officers on the boat and their exemplary discipline. It was interesting to hear how the Arab lads swim in the Channel near the shore and pick small bits of silver thrown in it for sport by the passengers.

Your second letter is dated from Suez and the account of the canal has created a desire in me to see the place.

The third letter is from Port Said and the fourth one from Alexandria. Alexandria is an ancient and noted city. In the olden days it was the capital of Egypt and a seat of learning. Philosophers and men of erudition from all parts of the world flocked there to exchange views. It had the largest library in the world and it is said to have been burnt by the Caliph Omar.\*

Your fifth and sixth letters were posted from

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\* Professor K. Hosmer says "not the Caliph Omar, as has been believed, but a mob of Christian monks infuriated with fanaticism set the Library at fire." Edt.

Naples and Geneva, the Italian cities. Both the places are said to be beautiful. Here you say, you had to wait for five or six days to catch a steamer. You did well by going out for drives in these places. Your description that they are full of vegetables and fruits and the healthy appearance of children with rosy cheeks, show that fruits and vegetables are valuable for children's diet. Naples is famous for its large cathedrals.

The largest among them is St. Paul's. I was surprised to hear from you that it cost 180,000,000 of Rupees, so much wealth sacrificed for one Cathedral !

You also visited the ruins of Pompeii : Let us hear something about this ruined city in your next letter. Please make a habit of noting down on the spot, everything that you observe about places, things and people worth mentioning.

Travel is an education in itself, but a costly one. On your way via Spain you saw the famous British Seaport, Gibralter, called "the key to the Mediterranean Sea " The British have an impregnable fort there.

We were glad to hear that you arrived safe at New York on the third of June. It took you one month and six days to reach your destination. On your arrival the authorities took down your names and addresses and the amount of money you had. They do not allow people to land who have no means of self support, and if by chance one lands there they pay his passage back and get rid of him from their country. Every man is expected to work and support himself otherwise he has no business to be in America. What a capital idea to enrich the state. Compare this

with the condition of our country—seething poverty, no law to prevent pauperism, no efforts to train the indolent in some profession to enable them to maintain themselves.

This letter has grown rather lengthy owing to my replying to all yours upto date.

With profound love from

Your Mother,

REBEKAH.

## Second Letter.

Bombay 27th July, 1902.

MY DEAR GIRLS,

May God bless you. I received both your letters from New York as well as from Cleaveland. Your regular communication relieves us of great anxieties. You describe everything there is on a grand scale—shops as big as our largest market, houses with fifteen and sixteen stories, electric tram cars run every minute and these not only on the roads, but also overhead twenty or twenty-five feet, with stations at intervals. You notice crowds of people everywhere busy with their work. Honesty, morality, religion, philosophy and science are all progressing remarkably. Even on the road there is hardly any bustle or noise. Caste distinction, untouchability, great and small, these things are not known there. You feel your true individuality. You hear no abuses and find cleanliness everywhere. Not only are their houses and clothes clean but the roads also. They are so scrupulously clean that they do not allow people to spit on the road. Blessed is the country and blessed are the people where such cleanliness reigns ! Our countrymen spit and blow their noses anywhere and everywhere. Adults and children use the road sides as latrines without any compunction. Filth and rubbish are dumped down on the public thoroughfares through doors and windows. They speak and behave just as they like without any thought whether their action is hurtful to others or not. There is no



**ELIZABETH & SARAH, Rebekah's daughters**



restriction whatsoever for evil doing. But scores of objections would be raised were a person to show his independence of thought or belief. They must continue to indulge in stupid practices of antiquity, eat and drink as their brethren are doing. In short, one must be a slave to the ruinous customs here.

Dear Girls, you have gone to the best country in the world. You should copy only the virtue among them and not the vice. Do not follow the practices that are harmful. For instance, as a rule, they do not wash their faces, clean their teeth, wash their mouths after every meal. Being a busy people, they eat hurriedly. All their meals consist of meat. These things are not to be copied. Take mixed diet with plenty of vegetables and fruits.

Cleveland college of physicians and surgeons is the best in America. It has produced many eminent doctors, who hold responsible positions in the world and are deeply engaged in research work. Dr. Crile has advanced so far as to experiment how to bring a dead person to life and has achieved a remarkable success in that direction. He kills animals and brings them to life. He revives people who are dead by drowning, or killed by lightning. His success is marvellous.

While at New York, you say, you received kindness at the hands of many ladies. They are always ready to give you whatever information you want, help you in every way, accompany you to see different places, invite you to dinners, reach and receive you at stations. How good of them !

You delivered your father's letter to the Principal of the college and we were glad to hear that he treated you very kindly, expressed his willingness to see you comfortable, and give his services if needed.

All these speak very highly of the people there. How kind and hospitable, helpful and encouraging they are. This account of yours relieves us of some of our anxieties regarding your comforts

So far so good, Now, dear girls, you will have vacation for two months and a half and I do not want you to waste your time but get the required books and continue further studies, so that it would be easy for you later on.

I conclude this letter with congratulations to you for selecting the best college in America and hope you girls will in future be serviceable to humanity by taking up such research work that would improve the lot of man. That would prove to us that you have justified your existence and blessed the family by adhering to our advice.

With love,  
Your dear mother,  
REBEKAH.

## Third Letter.

Bombay, 30th October, 1902.

DEAR GIRLS,

We are glad to hear that you are progressing well, that your college re-opened on the 16th and there are fifty professors and every facility for students. Sarah being a beginner will have to study five years and Lizzy only one as she has already finished one year's course in the Grant Medical College. The professors are able and learned men and their system of teaching is perfect. They teach a subject in a manner easily comprehended. There are complaint books for students' entry in the event of an incompetent professor. An unfavourable entry is inquired into and the professor warned. Should he be in any way found wanting, his services are dispensed with, and the vacancy filled up by an efficient man. The doctors in hospitals or private practitioners are made responsible for the death of a patient. They dare not retort that a person's time was up and he expired. If it is found out that a patient's life is forfeited through the neglect of a doctor, he is punished severely. Sometimes he is sent to jail. Doctors there have to be very careful in dispensing their prescriptions or conducting a surgical case. He is all the time under the impression that his life would be in danger if he happened to err, what a wonderful country ! The medical men do not work with the idea of making money only, but consider it their duty to administer to a patient. I know you are studious girls, but it is my duty as a mother to constantly din into your

ears to study hard. The object of study should not be to pass examinations only. That would not be acquiring true knowledge. Take, for instance, eating. Though it is true in one sense that the object of eating is to fill your stomach, yet its real aim is to sustain life, and keep you healthy, which is not achieved by the process of eating anyhow. The food may fill the stomach but if it is not well masticated and the saliva in the mouth is not allowed to mix well with it, the digestion will be impaired and give rise to many diseases and the object of sustaining life will be frustrated. Similarly, your study should be to acquire knowledge and put it to practice. In a surgical case it is not a matter of cutting and clipping but you have to be very cautious and know thoroughly the different muscles, and arteries and the importance of the construction of the part to be operated upon. At the same time, you have to be very careful of your knife while dissecting different parts. The dissecting knives are fatally poisonous. If a person happens to get a slight cut from it, blood—poison sets in and puts an end to his existence. There are number of fatal cases on record. I remember a sad case, when I was studying at the Grant Medical College, of Professor Dr. Hughes who forfeited his life to blood poison brought on by an operation in a confinement case. There is as much, if not more, deadly poison in the knife as in a cobra. There are may chances of a patient surviving in the case of an amputation of a hand, or leg, or even a tiger devouring an entire arm, but there is very little chance if surgeon's knife is handled carelessly.

Therefore, my dear girls, be very careful with your knife. This dreadful thought of knife poison always worries us. Warn your classmates also and be very careful.

Should it chance that any body were to receive a cut, the first thing is to immediately squeeze the wound hard so as to make the blood ooze out : follow this by washing with clean water, phenyle, carbolic lotion or Lotio hydrarg, Cloride perchlor. After the washing apply strong carbolic acid and paint it over with Collodium. This will countract fatal effects of the wound. At the same time, you have to be careful while examining a patient, otherwise the poison will touch your hand and nails and penetrate into your blood. To avoid the evil effects you must wash your hands every time with carbolic soap or any other preparation for the purpose. I know your professors will initiate you into these preliminary precautions but as a mother I cannot resist the impulse of warning you for your safety.

I was glad to read the account of the greatness of Cleveland ; comparatively a new town, its art and sciences so well developed, its large and clean roads, shops and different sorts of conveyances. It is half the size of Bombay : yet it has two Allopathic Medical Colleges, a Dentists' College, a Druggists' and Chemists' College, a Law College, College of applied sciences, three in number, besides, other colleges to learn different subjects, whilst in Bombay there is only one college for Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and one Solitary Medical College which is not only for Bombay alone but for the whole of

the Bombay Presidency. Another good thing is that knowledge of nursing is not confined to women only, as in this country, but men also take to that profession, what an advanced country ! No room for a beggar and none must remain without education. They have a law that every one must be educated upto a certain standard. Education is practically free to the poor as well as the rich. Even postal peons and tram conductors are graduates. One cannot help admiring such a blessed land : no inferior, no superior : all are equal. The only distinction being a good or a bad man ; whether one is rich or poor matters very little. There are no titles, such as lords, knights, earls, baronets etc. Your letters are full of information and very interesting. Your father says that he will publish these letters. Try and make time to write regularly giving all useful information.

With love,  
Your dear mother,  
REBEKAH.

## Fourth Letter.

*Bombay, 25th January 1903.*

DEAR GIRLS,

Your letter of 21st December and the previous ones reached us safe. I am glad to hear that you girls are progressing well in your studies and particularly Sarah, who was averse to studying medicine, is taking great interest in it. Here she used to say that she preferred teaching, painting, and oration to medicine. How she has become fond of it in so short a time is surprising. We never thought she would take to the profession. That's why one day, when she suddenly made up her mind to go, your father jokingly said that he would not send her to America, unless she showed her earnestness by passing a certain test. The test was to clip off the ears of a puppy dog. She performed this operation without any hesitation and it led to your father's sending her there with you. Still more surprising to us is the idea that she goes through the dissection work so cheerfully. At first the study of medicine seems rather irksome and unpleasant but when once you are in it you take to it wonderfully. I really think there is hardly any subject so interesting as the study of anatomy. In the beginning one does not realise its importance. That's why some good students keep away from the profession. : such is the case with your brother, John. I do not know why he took a dislike to it; however it is a matter of great satisfaction to me to hear that Sarah likes it. You say that the professors there are such experts that they make a

person having no taste for a particular profession, much against his wish, get fond of it ; such is their wonderful method of training pupils.

Your father had intended to train Sarah in oratory as she had an aptitude for it, and naturally she would fare well as a speaker. That would be done if she by chance show an indifference for the medical profession. There is a great want everywhere of good orators and particularly in our country. In spite of her going in for medicine, your father's ambition is to train his children in oratory and particularly Sarah. After obtaining the degree of M. D. he says she should go through three years' course in America in oratory, and he is determined to carry it out.

It is a great consolation to us to receive so many letters from the college authorities speaking in glowing terms about you girls. The Registrar or the Secretary of the college writes, your girls are highly intelligent and exemplary students and we are proud of them. The climate of our country agrees with them and they are getting into our ways and manners.

You had two weeks' holidays during X'mas, and we would like to know if you went anywhere and if there is anything of importance that we should know.

After the holidays, studies in your college must be in full swing. There are only two months before you for your examination, you should study hard and if you understand the subjects taught, there is no doubt that you will pass the examination. This is a

fact as much as twice two are four. It is not a question of luck as it is thought in this country. Besides, there is no such thing as one third or one fourth marks for passing the examination. You require at least 70% marks to pass and this shows how hard you have to be at your studies. You are big girls and it is not necessary for me to emphasise this fact.

Remember the nature of questions for your weekly examinations and study them carefully and if you do that you will find your final examination questions easy. Besides, you say that the marks awarded for weekly examinations are added to the final examination marks. This is very fair judging the abilities of a student.

May your efforts be crowned  
with success.

Your loving mother,  
REBEKAH.

**Fifth Letter.***Bombay, 6th June 1903.***My DEAR LIZZIE AND SARAH,**

We received a cablegram regarding Lizzie having passed the examination of M. D. and Sarah her first year's test, followed by your letters by the last mail. It was very gratifying to us to hear that you both passed high on the list of successful candidates. I cannot describe your father's joy. He gave his friends a hearty dinner on hearing the good news. The Secretary of your college wrote a nice letter to him about Elizabeth and said that she was awarded a diploma on Thursday 30th April. He also mentioned Sarah and praised both of you. Your school companions, Lulu A. Peterson and Miss Jessie E. Morrison also sent us letters in kind and very affectionate terms expressing their love and regard for you.

My dear girls, I wish to impress on you, that passing of examinations and getting high posts is not the goal of our ambition. It is only the first step towards it. A bird cannot fly all over the sky as soon as it gets its wings. A farmer's work is not completed by merely ploughing the ground. It is only the beginning of his work. Similarly is the case with you. We, in our age, have comfortable means at least of acquiring knowledge, but just imagine, my dear girls, the disturbed state of the countries, when there were no railways and no steamers, and people had to go thousands of miles on foot, from place to place in



**ELIZABETH M D First daughter of Rebekah.**



quest of it jeopardising their lives leaving their homes, their nearest and dearest, and suffering hardships and privations. Think of their courage and wonderful thirst for enlightenment. Let us thank our stars that that time is past. We have acquired happy conveniences of travel ; the countries are at peace ; new inventions are made and the spring of knowledge is flowing with much greater force. The doors of learning are thrown open alike to all. If, at such a time, we refrain from taking advantage of it, I would ask of what avail is our existence ? But it is very pleasing to me to note that my girls are wise and fond of knowledge. We have no desire to tell you to pass the examinations once for all and be money-making machines, pouring gold into our coffers for our comforts. Far from it, we want you to create an inexhaustible hunger in you and be ever greedy for knowledge.

We are preparing to build again the Temple of Hygiene and your father is working hard towards its accomplishment. He thinks of nothing else but Temple of Hygiene, participation of knowledge, dispersing knowledge and dispelling ignorance. There is a story of a cruel king called Kaunsa. He was to die at the hands of Krishna, born in Gokul, in the house of a milkman. Since the revelation, the image of Krishna always haunted him, wherever Kunsa turned his head. Such is the state of your father. All the time he thinks of his dear country and its people.

To give a wide scope to his activities he must have a platform of his own to speak to his countrymen. It is your bounden duty, my dear girls, to help

him wholeheartedly in his noble undertaking. Of all countries in the world, America is the most progressive country where art and science have grown rapidly. All the medical sciences are well in the fore there. American people are applying electricity for many incurable diseases with great success. They are making unceasing efforts to wean people from different vices by the use of certain sciences and I want you, girls, to pick up some of these things. They will be useful to you in this country. Let your father's words often uttered in his public lectures ring in your ears 'that there is no charity greater than impartation of knowledge ; no happiness or reward like dispelling of ignorance ; no better service to humanity than creating taste for knowledge amongst your countrymen.'

Your loving mother,  
REBEKAH.

## Sixth Letter.

MY DEAR GIRLS,

We received your letters. We are glad to hear that Sarah during the college vacation went through the course of Psychology, Mesmerism, Hypnotism, Personal Magnetism, Magnetic Healing etc. Before my letter reaches you, the college will be opening and we hope Sarah will devote herself to her college studies. The above mentioned subjects are meant for leisure hours only. Another two years and Sarah will be a full-fledged M. D. and will have plenty of time to spare for those stray subjects.

Your college is a branch of Ohio, Wesselyn University and it is a medical college. But in its other branch at Delever oratory, music, singing, law etc. are taught and you may at your leisure take any of those subjects. You are naturally fond of oratory and we would advise you to train yourself in that subject as there is a great demand for lady orators.

Lizzy has also made good use of her time and studied the process of curing certain incurable diseases by the application of electricity. This speaks very highly of her, and I congratulate her on her success. Her responsibility is very great. It is a splendid opportunity for her to show her kindness, her skill, her attention and her duty, and in return she will gain knowledge and experience in the profession. She should conduct herself in a manner to win the respect of all in the hospital. The physician in charge of the hospital does not think much of his

## Seventh Letter.

Bombay, 5th December 1903

DEAR GIRLS,

I am so glad to receive your letters regularly every mail and also to hear that the cold agrees with you : that Sarah is getting fond of her studies and Elizabeth gaining more experience in the hospital and everybody has a high opinion of you. Every thing is going on according to our desires and you girls are striving to master so many different subjects. In the midst of all this, my dear children, it pains me to break the news to you to interrupt you in your studies to ask you to return to Bombay leaving things as they are for the present. Since the death of your two sisters, Sophia and Rose by plague, my health has been gradually undermining, so much so that I can hardly eat or sleep. My sight, too, is growing dim and my tears are never dry for my lost beloved ones. I am reduced in weight a great deal.

One day I suddenly found a pain in my tongue. I consulted eminent doctors, Hakims etc. and all are of opinion that it is cancer. I tried several remedies to no effect. I am told that it is an incurable disease. Of late they say that cancer is cured by X rays and some other electrical treatment. Lizzie has experience in this line, as she has cured some cancer cases. Now, my dear girls, leave every thing alone and come back to attend to your dear mother. Alas ! it is sad and painful to think that I who have often written to you to acquire as much knowledge as



**ROSE, late daughter of Rebekah.**



possible, and not rest until you have done so, should be the one to recall you. After all the trouble and the pangs of separation that I have gone through in sending you thousands of miles away from home, I have involuntarily become the cause of coming in your way and marring your future progress. However, I have great hopes that you girls will save my life. When I look around me, I find there is no joy, peace or happiness in this world. There is discord between father and son, husband and wife, mother and daughter, brothers and sisters and friend and friend. In some places I see the parents have noble desires, while the children are quite the opposite ; in other places, I notice the parents petty minded, bigoted and dishonest having liberal-minded, honest and noble children ; well-educated and good-natured husband having uneducated, ill-tempered wife and *vice versa*.

Fortunately in our case God has blessed us with dutiful, obedient and knowledge-loving children and it is most lamentable that I have to send for them. I have given vent to my sad feelings because I cannot help myself, but let it not be understood from this that I am seriously ill. I attend to my patients and my daily work in spite of my ill-health. This nasty complaint may prove a danger to my life ; hence I take this step of recalling you my dear ones. Bring with you static machine and other instruments necessary in my case. If I rally, these very instruments could be exhibited in our Hall of Hygiene and Science and lectures delivered on the subject. On my recovery I shall send you back, cost what it may, so that my

country shall reap the benefit of your education. All these dreams depend on my health. My experience tells me that I do not stand a chance of recovery : but all my hopes are centered in you girls and I expect Lizzie to pull me through. As long as there is life, there is hope.

Before I close my last letter I must ask you to bring me something that may prove efficacious in my case. It is that most expensive metal in the world, called radium. Doctors say it costs thousands of rupees for one grain. Try and procure it and get so much as would be necessary for me.

I entreat you, dear girls, do not lose your presence of mind and be not over—anxious for me. Had it not been a case of cancer, I would not have troubled you. Take care of yourselves on your long voyage and do not stint money for your comforts.

Your anxious and grieved mother,

**REBEKAH.**



**FLORA**  
**Rebekah's late fourth daughter**



## Simeon's Services to Rebekah.

*"No man ever lived a right life who had not been chastened by a woman's love, strengthened by her courage and guided by her discretion."—Ruskin.*

We have already recorded what Rebekah had done for her husband. How she worked and laboured to consolidate his dreams. How she welded his desires into her duties. And in return what did her husband do for her? To all appearances it seemed that he did nothing but love her intensely. There was no fault to be found in his love for her. It was so strong and over-powering. If there is any soul-force in this world which sets matters right and makes this world worth living in, it is love and love alone. It is a tremendous force. It turns our world into a veritable paradise. Simeon possessed it in a powerful degree for his country too and he served its people whole-heartedly. There have been some who have given their lives for love. According to the Christian teaching God sacrificed His only son because he loved the world so much. The Hindu Purans say that Sri Ram Chandra performed miracles by walking through impenetrable forests and constructing a bridge in a single night across the Indian Ocean, defeating the king of Ceylon and saving his virtuous wife Sita, whom he loved to distraction and who was carried away by Ravan. For the love of Shireen, daughter of the Emperor Maurice, Ferhad accomplished the superhuman task of removing the

great mountain of Beyistoun and changing the course of rivers. Such is the marvellous power of love. It knows no difficulties, it surmounts all obstacles, it crosses rivers, mountains and oceans in the twinkling of an eye. It is this love which Simeon bestowed in full measure on his wife and she reciprocated it a thousand-fold. Simeon had dedicated himself to Rebekah. They were one of happiest couples in the world. His home was an exemplary one. Simeon was not dependent on his wife's earnings. He earned enough by his literary pursuits. Had he desired, he could have had lucrative posts that would have enriched him. Honours and titles were placed at his feet, but he modestly declined them. He was often instrumental in creating Rao Sahebs, Rao Bahadurs, Khan Sahebs and Khan Bahadurs etc.

Owing to his enlightened views, literary fame and oratorical powers, he was invited by a liberal-minded and highly enlightened prince and asked to produce specimens of his work. This he did to the great satisfaction of the prince who much appreciated his writings and rewarded him handsomely. Thereafter he returned to Bombay and was given a choice of selecting a lucrative post for himself on the Board of Education, but he thankfully refused the offer. His motive was to serve his country by pointing out to his countrymen the path of morality and helping them to break the shackles of religion under the guise of superstition.

He had undergone a medical course in the J. J. Hospital and could have secured a large practice and

acquired wealth but fate destined him for a nobler purpose. His wife helped and encouraged him and did all she could to leave him free to follow the bent of his mind. Thus Simeon accomplished the colossal work of delivering innumerable lectures and writing hundreds of manuscripts, published and unpublished, to raise the status of humanity. There is no social reformer to our knowledge in the Bombay Presidency who has worked in so many fields, viz :—morality, education, science etc. He was in his day a master-mind in all reforms. His one absorbing thought was to release his country from the thraldom of caste, creed, superstition, blind faith, customs etc. He should have been a recipient of the Nobel prize long ago for his services to his country.

His wife's name was Simha which he changed to Rebekah at the time of their marriage. It was Simeon who moulded and made his simple girl wife Rebekah into Rebekah—the authoress, Rebekah—the lecturer, Rebekah—the philanthropist, Rebekah—the mother of the poor and forlorn.

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## The Death.

*"Lives of great men all remind us,  
We can make our lives sublime"—Longfellow.*

Rebekah passed away on the 26th of June 1904, at the early age of forty-five. Rarely had the death of a benefactor of the country aroused such general grief throughout the Bombay Presidency as that of Rebekah's. Men, women and children who knew her shed bitter tears at the sad news of her sudden and untimely end, which had come not without warning. None could bear the thought that one who had toiled so much for suffering humanity, who had so much to live for and from whom so much was expected for the good of others, should now be lying in the grave. The mind so rich in sympathy, so full of devices for the alleviation of humanity, was lost to them. The gentle and loving voice that soothed the wounds of thousands was hushed for ever. The home that once looked so happy and bright was made desolate by heart-rending grief. The thought of rebuilding the Temple of Hygiene, the dream of Simeon's services to humanity with other visions for the uplift of his country vanished like morning mist before the cruel death of that central figure—Rebekah. Who can solve the mystery as to why such noble souls are carried away in the midst of their labour of love while others are rudely nipped in the bud before they had blossomed out. For what purpose are our goodness, our experience and our knowledge so short-lived? Why should the innocent and good go through the ordeal of suffering?

Throngs of men and women came to see the corpse of the noble dead that was so loved, revered and admired. Many were heard philosophising as to whose pleasure such calamities have been ordained ? Why the wicked thrive and triumph while the good suffer ignominiously ? Does the standard of good and evil, just and unjust of the Almighty God differ from ours ? Do the priests and the pandits lie when they say there is justice in the world ? Is it to be found in the Sacred Books only ? Is Resurrection a myth or an invention of priests ? Is life ruled by mere chance ? In such a chaotic state of mind, one is inclined to believe that the whole world is ruled by cruel laws, without any regard for the happiness of man. There seemed no satisfactory answer to these earnest questions. Man has been tormented, made to suffer from ages past, said some ; yet there is no response to his pitiful solicitations for relief. The questions whence, how and why, remain unanswered. The robed priest is as ignorant on this matter as the ant on the anthill. Would it not be better to close this drama by putting an end to human life by one stroke, thus relieve all crying and weeping, all tragedy and lamentations, all agony and tortures of the innocent, who are brought on this vast arena without their consent for somebody's wanton pleasure, surely not of man's ? Religion claims faith and belief but never cares to satisfy man's craving for absolute knowledge. Science we find never justified the random working of nature. Are we to remain prisoners without being told of our crimes ? Is it fair-play ? Shall we ever be permitted to scale this impregnable wall and have a

glimpse beyond, if the wrongs are compensated, or we were justly imprisoned and the intelligence, experience and knowledge have ample scope for their development for any useful purpose? The darkness that surrounds our eyes seems interminable. Are we to die in ignorance and misery with all our efforts to know the secrets of Nature? Nature is dumb as a statue for thousands of years to the vital cravings of the human mind. She refuses to answer. No relief from hunger, poverty, misery, disease and death! Will the strong always oppress and live upon the weak? The law that rules the brute creation will for ever rule man also? Shall we be tossed about mercilessly for no fault of ours? Shall the poor always walk in the mire to be crushed by the vehicles of the rich? Shall the poor remain hungry while the rich fill themselves with dainty dishes? Is it not natural that our feelings would revolt against this order of things and envy the opulent? "Nature disdains human grief and with servile homage she smiles upon the felicitous."

The death scene in Simeon's house was pathetic beyond description. The inconsolable husband and weeping children prayed in mournful tones, half dazed, half paralysed, that they would fast; go on pilgrimage to the sacred shrine of any god or goddess; pay reverence to any sage or saint; bow before any temple or church; make vows however rigid; smear their bodies with ashes and retire to the jungle as Fakirs or Sanyasees, counting the beads for Rebekah; cross stormy oceans; stand upto the neck on the New Moon night in the sea; sit in terror-striking cemetery

at the dead of night ; lie on iron spikes like the Jogis ; or perform any hard penance if these could bring back the saintly Rebekah to her grief-stricken husband and children. 'Vain, all is vain, sighed the broken hearted and distracted Simeon, " alas ! is life possible after death. Are the tales of thousands of dead brought to life and recorded in the Sacred Scriptures a mere myth ? O ! if our piteous cries and lamentations would reach the angel of death and he would condescend to restore Rebekah back to us on condition that I, her husband should share the remaining days of my life with her, and retire to the Himalayas with her for a short time, I would jump with joy and kiss his feet and offer a thousand prayers for the gift of Rebekah's life. I would consent to any terms so long as my Rebekah was restored to me to continue her noble work."

Alas ! these were empty ravings to bring the dead to life. The light of the twentieth century has driven the miracle period away from the world as Job says, "*As the clouds are consumed and vanisheth away : so that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.*" or go quote the words of Omar Khayam :—

*"No longer hug your grief and vain despair,  
But in this unjust world be just and fair,  
Since the substance of the world is naught,  
Deem yourself naught and so shake off dull care."*

It is wiser to submit to the laws of Nature with a good grace. The best memorial that could be raised in honor of the noble dead is to write their precepts on the tablets of our hearts and follow in their footsteps.

**APPENDIX I.****Letters of Condolence.**

DEAR MR. SIMEON,

The "Kesari" of 4th July to hand. I was drowned in sorrow to hear about Mrs. Simeon's premature death. What an uncommon lady, what a type of modesty, what a wonderful philanthropist and exalter of morality. The country has suffered an immeasurable loss and I do not know what time it would take to repair it. What an expert in her profession, how industrious, what a devoted wife, what incessant efforts she made to alleviate the sufferings of her sex and raised the status of womanhood of her country ! Taking all these into consideration I can safely say that another lady of her kind was not to be found ; she was unparalleled and womanhood personified. There was no feeling of mine and thine that existed in her. She was above these petty things. I had my son Gunpati in Bombay for his education. I asked you to keep your eyes on him. I can never forget the kindness you both have shown him though he bears no relationship to you, nor belongs to your faith. You took keen interest in his education, made him study different works, spent lot of money on his clothes, nursed him in his illness and loved him as if he was your own child. The more I think of Mrs. Simeon's nobleness, the more I reverence her sweet memory. I have also heard that she treated the poor patients free ; not only had she stopped at this, but gave them food and clothes and helped them to be happy. To diffuse knowledge she spent thousands of rupees and built a lecture hall which, to the misfortune of the country, fell victim to fire. This event is one of the most important factors of her life.

If I feel so much grieved at the death of such a wonderful personality that it is beyond me to conjecture how crushed you

must be feeling under the weight of this terrible sorrow. However, I hope you will submit to the inevitable with resignation and console your dear children.

Chiplun.  
7th July, 1904.

}     *Your partaker in sorrow,*  
          **Gopal Narayan Athley.**

DEAR MR. SIMEON,

As I am touring and inspecting my schools in the district, I am quite shocked to learn of the death of your dear wife Rebekah. What a noble personage is gone, a very mother of the poor. You know some time ago, I lost my brother—a promising young man who was a great support of my family. Soon after, within six months my mother who was living with him, died of broken heart. Then again to increase our misfortune my sister, a young and well-educated girl of eighteen followed her brother and mother to heaven. I have been very much grieved by the death of these relations, and I must tell you, I am equally grieved to hear of the death of Mrs. Simeon. Her private charity to the Christian families and other poor people were boundless and yet her left hand did not know what her right hand gave. When I was sick, nearly two months at your place, Mrs. Simeon was a mother to me. Her death is a loss to the community and loss to hundreds of poor families.

Anand (Gujrath).

10th July 1904.

}

*Yours in Sorrow,*  
**Edward D. Shevak.**

*Several letters of condolence were received. We have given above only a couple for exigency of space.*

## Letters from the Public.

### *At the Inauguration Ceremony of the Hall.*

1. FROM—The Private Secretary to H. H. the Maharaja Saheb Gaikwar of Baroda, G. C. S. I.

I am directed to convey to you His Highness's thanks for your kind invitation. His Highness wishes the Institution every success, and as a mark of his appreciation of your labours in this noble cause, he has been pleased to grant a donation.

2. FROM—M. V. Joshi Esqr. B. A. L. L. B. Amraoti.

Our ladies have not forgotten your lectures when you were last. We have full sympathy with the work you have undertaken, and the Hall you are going to establish has been needed for many days past.

3. FROM—R. S. Tipnis, Esqr. B. A. L. L. B. District Judge, Khandesh.

Please accept for yourself and Mrs. Walker my hearty good wishes and sympathy with the noble undertaking.

4. FROM—Rao Bahadur Narayan Rao Dajiba M. A. Civil Judge Khandwa.

My heart is with you, and I very sincerely congratulate you on what you have so nobly achieved. You are a man of philanthropic instincts, and you have always used your endeavours for the good of your fellowbeings, and it is no wonder that your unselfish endeavours have always been crowned with success.

5. FROM—R. B. Vishnu M. Mahajani M. A. Educational Inspector, Berar.

I trust that the opening ceremony will pass off with success, and that the Hall will be means of carrying out your laudable plan of educating the masses.

6. FROM—R. B. Lallubhoy Goverdhandas, Deputy Collector, Belgaum.

The Object with which the Hall has been erected is praiseworthy, and it will form a permanent memorial of your public spirit and liberality.

7. FROM—R. B. B. K. Joshi, Assistant Commissioner, Hyderabad (Deccan).

Let me assure you most sincerely that my full sympathies are with you in this your praiseworthy undertaking. I wish you every success.

8. FROM—G. S. Sar Desai Esqr., B. A., Baroda.

I hope your noble object is progressing satisfactorily. My full sympathy is with your undertaking, and I am ready to do all I can for you.

9. FROM—Rao Bahadur Anand Rao R. Talcherkar, Bandra.

My hearty good wishes are with you and your good wife. May the best of results follow from your noble efforts is my earnest prayer.

10. FROM—Rao Saheb Keshao Vishnu Ghaisas, Mamladar, Chiplun.

The Hall will remove a long felt want in this country, and is to be expected to be conducive to the prosperity of this country in general, and of educated natives in particular. I cannot lose this opportunity of conveying my best wishes for the Institution, as well as for you both as instrumental, at a large sacrifice, in accomplishing this sacred object in the interests of Education.

11. FROM—Rao Saheb Kashidas M. Dalal, Sub Judge, Nandurbar.

Accept my best wishes for the success of your noble aims in a direction whereto hardly any has had the opportunity to look.

12. FROM—G. N. Kane Esqr., Pleader, Amraoti. You are doing excellent work for the amelioration of your countrymen. I should have been very happy indeed to have been present at the inauguration of your Hall of Literature, Science and Hygiene ; but at present I cannot leave my family alone.

13. FROM—Dr. Joseph Benjamin Bamnolkar, Ahmedabad.

Though I shall be unable to be present in body at the inaugural ceremony of the Hall which you both have so disinterestedly built, at so much expense and self sacrifice, for the diffusion of literary, scientific, and hygienic knowledge among all classes of the community, my humble heart will be there with you on Thursday next, wishing every success to the Institution, which

will be opened at the noble hands of his Lordship the Lord Bishop of Bombay.

14. FROM—R. B. Phansalkar Esqr., B. A., Poona.

I appreciate the praiseworthy work you have undertaken and heartily wish that the purpose for which the Hall is designed will be achieved, and you be rewarded by Heaven.

15. FROM—V. G. Godbole Esqr., Pleader, Ratnagiri.

A lecture Hall at Bombay was a necessity. I am glad you have succeeded in supplying it. Your efforts for the public good are now almost crowned with success. I hope God will give you energy and health to do more for the good of poor natives.

16. FROM—Keshavlal Motilal Mehta Esqr., Medical officer, Panchora.

Wishing you every success in your noble work commenced, and with warm respects to you both.

17. FROM—Krisnaji Govalkar Esqr., Medical Officer, Savda. I wish every success and prosperity to the Mandir.

18. FROM—Isaac Aaron Esqr., Medical Officer, Jambusar.

I am exceedingly glad to see that you and Mrs. Rebekah Walker are taking so much interest and trouble on behalf of our poor community in providing them with a free Hall of Literature, Science, and Hygiene. No doubt it is a great boon to our community, and I hope, they will duly appreciate its value.

19. FROM—R. R. Vaidya Esqr., Castle Rock.

I heartily sympathise with your philanthropic objects. I returned only yesterday from my native village in which two young women lost their lives whilst in the troubles of child-birth during my absence. The misery that is cast on the two homes is fresh in my memory, and I hope, kind Mrs. Walker will devote her attention to giving her female audience the benefit of her knowledge in midwifery. Deep ignorance of this branch of medicine prevails in the mofussil, and causes a wide-spread anxiety and sorrow in many a household. I hope the Institution will prosper and will continue to confer lasting happiness on humanity. In conclusion, I once more congratulate you both in your benevolent objects.

20. FROM—Dr. Judah Hyam, G. P. V. C. F. Z. S.

I wish the Institution every success, and hope it fulfils all your desires as regards its usefulness and the different purposes for which it is designed. Your endeavours are in the right direction, and they cannot, if persevered in, fail to be productive of good results in time to come.

21. A TELEGRAM FROM—Khan Saheb Ezra Reuben B. A., L.L. B., Sub-judge, Haveri.

“Sincere Congratulations. Regret absence. Success attend your efforts.”

### **Mr. Simeon Benjamin's Lecture Series.**

“There can be no two opinions as regards the great utility of the lecture series, Mr. Simeon Benjamin has organised in his “Arogyamandir” at Chunamkiln Road. It is a catholic Institution and aims at teaching science and hygiene in a popular manner to the masses. Befitting the aim is the lecture series and it speaks volumes in favour of Mr. Walker that the lectures are cosmopolitan and catholic in every sense of the word. All races, all creeds and all sciences are represented therein.”—

**Induprakash,**

*November 5th, 1900.*

CHICAGO, ILL., U. S. A.,  
November, 15, 1900.

**Mr. S. B. and Mrs. Rebekah Walker  
of Bombay, India.**

*Projectors and Founders of the Hall of Literature,  
Science and Hygiene.*

*The Most Important Institution on behalf of the People of India  
yet Established in that country.*

"Through the courtesy of B. N. Pitale, L. L. D., our correspondent in Bombay, India, we have received the information about the good work done by Mr. S. B. and Mrs. Rebekah Walker in the interest of humanity in that city, by the building and dedication of the "Hall of Literature, Science and Hygiene," which took place but a short time ago, the Right Rev. James Macarthur, D. D., Lord High Bishop of Bombay, presiding,

Mr. Walker is highly endorsed as a scholar and philanthropist. At the dedication of the Hall, built at the expense of his good and generous wife, who is in perfect accord with his work."

The president said :—

"I am glad to have been present here this evening as this is a unique enterprise in Bombay, and I am not aware that there is any corresponding to it elsewhere. Mr. and Mrs. Walker are entitled to the greatest possible credit, and I trust that they may be rewarded by seeing a great improvement in the sanitary conditions affecting Bombay, and thereby an improvement in the sanitary condition of the city. Then we shall get rid of the plague which has existed among us for so many years, and also get rid of other types of sickness. Plague has continued for years because of the insanitary conditions of our city, and what we want to do is to improve sanitation. A beginning has been made in the inauguration of the scheme for the rebuilding of parts of Bombay in which many of us took part a few days ago. We need to impress people everywhere—for at present they do

not see it—with the necessity and usefulness of sanitary improvement. They resist the measures that are suggested, and seem to be contented to live under the same conditions that have been passed down to them by their Fathers from generation to generation. But I hope that the effects of the knowledge which is likely to be conveyed to them in this Hall may work like leaven, and slowly effect a change. The beginning of all great improvements must be small, and what we require in the present instance is to secure a recognition of the value of what will be taught here, and then we shall work a great reform. If we build up good opinion in the end we shall accomplish results. That I feel sure is what Mr. and Mrs. Walker are trying to do, and in that work I am sure we all wish them God-speed."

### EDITORIAL QUERY.

"Who will be philanthropic and generous enough to provide a building and illustrating apparatus, for use free to the public, and in which shall be taught the real truths of sanitary and hygienic science here in Chicago?"

"There are thousands of mothers, fathers and their children who need such teachings."

"Where are the professional physicians who will contribute their services to teach the people how to live right; teach mothers the laws of maternity, so that the sufferings of motherhood may be greatly reduced, and teach the father, and sons, and daughters to control and master abnormal appetites and passions, which are the cause of all injustice, violation of natural law, sin and wickedness?"

"There is ample opportunity for work of the kind Mr. Walker and his wife are doing in India to be done in Chicago."



## APPENDIX II.

### Opinion of G. M. Sathe B. A., J. P.

*Registrar of Native Publications and Reporter on the Native Press to Bombay Government.*

I have much pleasure to state that Mr. S. B. Walker, who is a very able and learned gentleman, is the author of several useful Marathi books written in chaste language and a simple, clear and forcible style. His books are full of very sound moral advice and are evidently very widely read, since some of them have gone through two or three editions of not less than one thousand copies each and some of even three thousand copies. I learn that Mr. Walker has been handsomely rewarded for two of his works by H. H. the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda and also patronised by the Bombay Government and the Director of Public Instruction, Berar. I have myself read Mr. Walker's books with much interest and would gladly recommend them to others who may be desirous of improving their manners, habits etc. Besides the printed and published books Mr. Walker had with him a large stock of valuable works in manuscript some of which I had read and which, if published, would have commanded a very extensive sale. But unfortunately for him and the public they were burnt to ashes along with many other valuable things, such as charts, maps, globes, standard library books etc. when his dwelling house and the beautiful "Hall of Hygiene and Literature," which only a few months ago, were the scene of so many learned and interesting lectures and discussions on social, moral and scientific subjects caught fire and were burnt this month. Mr. Walker seems to have only one aim in life and that is to deliver and publish lectures and books with a view to educate and morally raise his countrymen. In all his literacy and benevolent understandings he is supported with means by his amiable and educated wife, Mrs. Rebekah S. Walker, who has a very extensive practice as midwife in Bombay and the mofussil and is herself the authoress of some medical publications. Her books entitled "Kutumba Mantri" or

A Family Medical Adviser, the "Midwife" in Marathi and Gujrathi, "Barrenness or Sterility in women," etc. are very useful publications and must be very extensively sold.

Bombay 16th May, 1901.

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### Opinion of Sir Bhal Chandra Krishna,

K.T., J.P., L.M.

I have known Mr. and Mrs. Walker for many years past. Mrs. Rebekah S. Walker is a highly respectable lady practising in Bombay as a midwife and commands a good practice. She built out of her savings the Hall of Literature, Science and Hygiene, which cost her including the Library, Instruments, Furniture etc. Rs. 30,000 to 40,000. The Hall was supplied with a very valuable library, a number of hanging charts, diagrams and moveable atlases also with several hygienic and other scientific instruments and human skeletons. In fact Mr. Walker spared neither money nor pains to make the Hall very useful to the public. The opening ceremony was performed by the Lord Bishop. Several useful scientific and other lectures were delivered in this Hall and they were always free to the public. The last series was opened by the late Mr. Justice Ranade and the inaugural address was delivered by me and I had the honour of presiding at several scientific lectures also. Mr. Walker was the moving spirit of the whole movement. He has devoted his whole life, to the advancement of scientific knowledge amongst the people and was unremitting in his endeavour to make the whole series of lectures very successful so much so that at the end of these lectures he fell ill owing to hard work both day and night.

It was a matter for general regret that such a very useful institution was completely destroyed by fire on the 3rd May last. Some very valuable manuscript lectures prepared by Mr. Walker as his life long work were destroyed in this fire.

## APPENDIX III.

### Proceedings Of A Meeting Held For The Purpose Of Presenting A Testimonial.

To Mr. Charles Joshua King,

*Late of H. M's. Customs, for his bravery.*

On the 6th September 1901, a meeting of the friends of Dr. S. B. and Mrs. Walker and others of their sympathisers was held at the Church Mission Hall, Girgaum, at 5. 30 P. M., under the presidency of the Revd. Canon W. A. Roberts, M. A., for the purpose of expressing their obligations to Mr. C. J. King for having saved the lives of Mrs. and Mr. Walker at the risk of his own, from the fire which occurred on their premises on the 3rd of May 1901, in which their dwelling house, and the elegant Lecture Hall, where, only lately, a series of public lectures had been given on a variety of interesting and instructive subjects, daily, for over two months, together with all their valuable contents, were totally destroyed.

There was large attendance of European and Native Ladies and Gentlemen at the meeting. Mrs. Laxton presided at the Organ.

The proceedings were opened by the singing of a Hymn and the offering of a prayer.

The Chairman said :—They had met that day under both sad and joyful memories connected with incidents of the past. It was perhaps two or three years ago, that Mr. Walker carried out the one object of his life, namely, the provision of a nice library and a Hall which, he hoped, would be of great benefit to his friends and others. The lecture hall had been erected for the benefit of the general public. But it was burnt down in May last with its library and rich furniture. Though the house of Mr. Walker was burnt down, yet Mr. and Mrs. Walker were living to-day, and Mr. C. J. King was instrumental in saving their lives, at the risk of his own in the midst of a furious fire. Mr. King was very much gratified at being the means of so good a work as saving human lives, and he wanted no reward ; but Mr. and Mrs. Walker would not be satisfied with that. They desired that their

acknowledgments and appreciations should be shown in a public manner, which was the chief reason of the meeting being called. He then called upon Dr. Walker to address the meeting.

Dr. Walker then said:—

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with feelings of much solemnity and thankfulness to God as well as with sincere pleasure, that I stand before you this evening to express our debt of gratitude to our friend, Mr. C. J. King, who was instrumental in saving our lives at the risk of his own, from the most awful danger of fire which burnt our dwelling house, our Lecture Hall and all their contents. It would have also destroyed us, had it not been for the promptitude, kindness and fortitude shown by Mr. King. We owe our lives to him and we meet here to-day to enjoy the pleasure of your company ; otherwise, we should have been numbered with the dead four months ago. The very recollection of that night is a source of horror to us, when Mr. King managed to force open the door of the room in which we were fast asleep, awoke us. We were so much alarmed and confused that we, at first, did not know where we were, or what we were to do. We saw at once one huge mass of fire immediately in front and only a few feet distant from us. Mr. King, with undaunted courage, hurried us down the burning stairs. No sooner did we reach the ground floor than the cupboards of the room in which we were sleeping and which were just near our beds fell down with a tremendous crash, and the staircase, by which we had descended, was in a blaze within the twinkling of an eye. It seems that the fire had already reached the floor beneath the cupboards and the staircase ; and we had only just had a minute to come down. From this, you will easily imagine what a narrow escape we had on that frightful night. Mr. King did not stop at simply rescuing us from fire, but seeing the numerous maps and charts on the walls of the Lecture Hall fly to and fro, owing to the wind and the blaze of the fire, and seeing the Hall full of furniture, scientific apparatus and other articles, determined to save as many of these things as he could. He, therefore, ran into the Hall although the fire had already reached the roof of the Hall and the tiles were falling down one after another in rapid succession.

With much persuasion, I tried to restrain him from doing this ; for the spectacle was awful. Nevertheless, he did not regard my entreaties, and brought out of the Hall, into the compound, a few articles such as he could, with difficulty, secure. And even these, as the fire spread, were burnt.

We are Mr. King's friends ; we are his neighbours : naturally therefore, he has affection for us, and this made him thoroughly desperate with respect to his own life and absolutely forgetful of his own self for our sake. Apart from that, what we hear from various reports of Mr. King's sympathetic disposition for people in distress, we are led to believe that it is Mr. King's kind nature in general to run headlong into danger for the rescue of those who are in imminent peril and to rescue them anyhow without distinction of caste, creed or colour. I shall relate to you one or two incidents of his life, out of the many I know.

When Mr. King was only a school-boy, his school-fellows well remember how he jumped into a well to save the life of a Parsi, who had accidentally fallen therein while drawing water therefrom. Another incident of a still more daring character was of a party of European families proceeding in a boat from Bombay to Urn for a picnic. When the boat nearly reached the place of its destination, one of its occupants, who was a lady, happened to fall into the sea by accident. She was, however, not to be drowned ; for, Mr. King was there ; and he, and only he, jumped into the water and with excessive efforts saved the life of that poor, helpless, well nigh drowned lady.

Besides these there are other praise-worthy instances of Mr. King's saving the lives of people in danger. I feel quite confident from what I have read and heard about the Royal Humane Society in England, that if such instances were brought to the notice of that body in a proper way, it would not fail to award its Certificates of Honour and medals to Mr. King, for he fully deserves them.

Now to turn to our case, we must sincerely confess, we cannot adequately repay our deep debt of gratitude towards Mr. King.

But we wish to manifest our regard, esteem and appreciation

by presenting some trifle to our most valued friend, who, we hope, will accept it as a small token emanating from grateful hearts.

Before concluding, I should like to allude to the just action of the Alliance Company, acting through their agents, the Firm of Messrs Lyon and Company in Bombay, taking a correct view of their liability of their insurance of our property. Without their keen sense of justice and impartiality, this meeting to-day would have been a total impossibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before I resume my seat, I beg to express, on behalf of Mrs. Walker and myself, our sincere thanks for the trouble you have taken in coming here to-day and spending your valuable time at what the Chairman so appropriately characterised as a unique gathering.

After this, Rao Sahib G. M. Sathe, B.A., Govt. Reporter on the Native Press and Registrar of Native Publications, Bombay, said:—

President, Ladies and Gentlemen, I rise to offer my quota to the tribute of praise and thanksgiving which Mr. C. J. King deserves richly, for the valiant and brave manner in which he saved the lives of our friends, Dr. and Mrs. Walker. You have already learnt from the mouth of Mr. Walker himself the circumstances and imminent peril to life, in which they were sleeping in their house on that disastrous night of 3rd May last, unconscious of the conflagration that was raging about them, and how, if they had not been awakened and hurried down the stairs by Mr. King, they would have been engulfed in the burning pile and would have been lost and lost for ever to their friends and their countrymen.

Friends, you can imagine to yourselves how Mr. King braved the danger to extricate from the jaws of death his neighbours, unmindful of the risk to his own life which he was running. When a house is on fire or when a person falls into a well, the incident attracts to the scene of the calamity a large crowd of people, most of whom are mere lookers on; while some are standing expressing pious sympathy for the sufferer and making inquiries and surmises as to how the disaster may have been brought about; a few daring and sympathetic spirits, knowing the

perilousness of the occasion and the promptness of action necessary thereon, will rush into the building on fire, or jump into a well into which some one has fallen and try their utmost to save life. Indeed such brave spirits are very few and far between. Human nature is so constituted that you will find sometimes in that miscellaneous gathering, men, *mean* men, who will look on the burning house with a sort of satisfaction and will try to possess themselves of some articles out of the property if they possibly could save any. Such is the world. Ladies and Gentlemen, you will find in this vast world three sorts of persons—Good, bad and indifferent. By indifferent, I mean, neither good nor bad, but middling. To this last class belongs a greater majority of men. Most are indifferent to the good of others if it in any way interferes with our own ease and comfort or involves sacrifice of labour or of money. We will do good to others, provided we do not thereby diminish our own comforts or endanger ourselves. Such are the men whom I call neither good nor bad and who deserve neither praise nor censure. The second class of bad men is, thank God, less numerous than the class of indifferent men. These men will seek to benefit themselves at the cost of others, and with a view to derive even a small benefit to themselves, will put others to immense loss. The remaining class, namely that of good men, is the least numerous. They are the noblest of men. They do not care so much for their own selves as for others. The business of their life is to do benevolent deeds. Their comfort lies in the comfort of others, and for them life has no charm unless it presents to them opportunities of obliging others. They do good acts not with a view to any ulterior object or reward, but for their own satisfaction. Mr. King, I have no hesitation in saying, has shown himself to belong to this noble class of benevolent men. When he saved our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Walker, without any thought of self, he did not do it in view of any praise or reward. He felt impelled by a call of duty to save their lives and he willingly obeyed that impulse, although there were cries from his relations and friends "King, don't you go up, King, don't you go up, the staircase is on fire." Though Mr. King did not look forward

to any parise or an expression of gratitude, yet, Ladies and Gentlemen, it behoves us to do our duty and it is in the performance of that duty that I express, and that too willingly, my own gratitude and that of the whole Maratha speaking community to Mr. King for the valuable services he has rendered to us all. Most of you, Ladies and Gentlemen, are aware of the worth of our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Walker who, as you all know, has been practising long as a midwife and has saved many a female from the throes of childbed and the agonies to which it is liable. Besides she has delivered several instructive lectures to females and has published some books which are very useful to our families. Mr. Walker is a learned man, and a Marathi scholar and above all, he is, I should say, a philanthropist devoting himself and his earnings for the last thirty years, to the furtherance of education and the spread of the light of knowledge broadcast throughout the Maharashtra country by his lectures and by his numerous writings. He is also a medical man. But instead of practising medicine and earning money as hundreds of medical men do, he spends his time in popularising Hygiene and allied subjects amongst the people by his lectures and pen. He is the author of more than two dozen works on different subjects, which bear testimony to his high literary talents, his breadth of views and his nobility of character. I have read some of these publications and I have no hesitation in saying that they afford very good reading both interesting and instructive. Besides these published works, Mr. Walker had in his possession nearly three hundred lectures in manuscript ready for the press written on social, moral, religious, philosophical, hygienic and various other useful and important subjects, in an elegant and impressive style. I had seen them myself and I am sure that nobody who had a look at them would have failed to admire them. But it extremely grieves me to tell you that they have all been burnt to ashes in the conflagration which destroyed his residence, the Hall of Literature, Science and Hygiene—that beautiful Hall which Mr. and Mrs. Walker had built for public lectures, and the valuable library of books, charts and articles of apparatus which decorated the Hall and so much facilitated the work of illustrating lectures.

This Hall had been opened to public lectures by the Lord Bishop of Bombay. It was again opened to the Native public for Marathi and vernacular lecture by the late lamented the Hon'ble Mr. Justice M. G. Ranade, who expressed his admiration at the sacrifice of money, time and labour which Mr. Walker had undergone for the sake of public good. The Hall was a scene of nearly a hundred free lectures last year extending over a period of more than two months and delivered on various subjects by the learned *elite* of Bombay. The Hall was daily crowded and thousands of people derived benefit from those lectures. The Hall was, as it were, a Tower of Babylon in which were spoken a variety of languages—English, Marathi, Urdu &c. Mr. Walker took so much pains to bring about these lectures that one was surprised at the indefatigable zeal which he displayed and the trouble he took in connection with them. He had to secure learned lectures and qualified gentlemen to preside at them, advertise the lectures in the Bombay dailies and other Newspapers in different languages, to receive the audience and to do a thousand and one other details too numerous to mention. I mention all these facts, Ladies and Gentlemen, simply to give you an idea of the value of the lives which Mr. King has been instrumental in saving and of the degree of intensity of gratitude which we feel for Mr. King's act. I have taken so much of your valuable time, and I feel I am not justified in intruding more upon it ; but before I conclude I would express my desire that publicity be given to Mr. King's disinterested acts of bravery, so that they may be brought to the notice of the Royal Humane Society and his benevolence may be recognised more widely and more fittingly than we have been able to do in our humble way in this Hall this evening.

Dr. B. N. Pitale said :—

The previous speakers have described to you, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, the deed of valour which Mr. King accomplished in saving the lives of our friends, Dr. and Mrs. Walker, who have done so much to diffuse knowledge amongst the people of this city without sending the hat round as is usually the case, but with their own hard earnings built and lavishly furnished their Hall with the latest scientific instruments, charts etc, and had placed these at the disposal of the citizens of Bombay,

irrespective of caste or creed, and without money or any fee, for lectures on Hygiene etc. Could there be anything more noble than such a deed ? I say no. When such a man and his family were saved by Mr. King, how much have we all in this city to be grateful to him. But the one or two isolated instances of bravery which Mr. King performed are nothing when compared with others which I know as a matter of fact he achieved on other occasions. I feel it my duty to bring these prominently to your notice, in order that you may be able to judge in a proper manner the extent of his daring deeds. On one occasion, when a Nawab had alighted at the Grant Road Railway Station, and showed signs of semi-insanity, and when in that state drew out his sword and waving it, rushed on the crowd, the passengers on the platform, as well as the staff, fled in all directions, and the agitation was something awful. Mr. King happened at that time to reside in a bungalow opposite. As soon as he heard of this, he was at once on the scene, and rushed on the Nawab and disarmed him in no time, and placed him in a carriage with a view to send him away to his abode. But somehow or other, as Mr. King's back was turned, he drew his loaded revolver ; again, Mr. King had to show his bravery. He dashed headlong into the carriage and with difficulty took away the weapon and carried the Nawab back to the station, and placed him securely in the station chowkey, in order that he might not again do further mischief, either to himself or to the by-standers. I again ask if this was not risking his life for others ? If it had not been for Mr. King's prompt action we do not know how many persons might have lost their lives or been injured.

In the Bombay Riots, especially those of 1893, when stones, sticks etc. were hurled in all directions, the bungalow of a rich Mahomedan gentlemen of Grant Road was besieged by 6 to 7 hundred rioters, as also the Mosque adjoining it. Mr. King happened to be there, and he was instrumental with others in driving away the crowd with tact, persuasion and force, and thus those two buildings and their inmates, who were in *terrorem* were saved from destruction.

We next see Mr. King in the front at a time when the Plague Riot occurred in 1898. Mr. King was driving with a friend from

Grant Road to Mazagaon and when close to the Two Tanks only a few yards from where the two unprotected soldiers were done to death a few seconds before, they were set upon by the mob. His friend was nearly killed. Mr. King with tact and not without receivnig a good thrashing, managed with some help to carry his friend to the Plague Hospital close to the Northbrook Garden, where he knew there would be some medical aid for his friend. Seeing his friend cared for, what does he do, but runs from this Hospital to his bngalow at Grant Road and returns with his revolver amidst stones, sticks etc. to the aid of his friend in spite of the entreaties of his family, who saw that he was covered with blood. On his way he meets two Police officers, who asked him for some cartridges for their revolvers ; he hands them some, as they had none, and they all run to the Hospital where the mob was collected in force. They disperse the crowd and enter the Hospital and while looking at his friend, cry goes round that the hospital is set on fire. They run to help those who are trying to extinguish the fire while missiles from all sides are being thrown at them. They rush in whichever direction these come—houses, lanes etc. and make many arrests. The Police officers had their work to do ; but Mr. King stays at the Hospital to protect his friends, the European Nurses and others belonging to the Hospital. He does not leave his friend to die, but late at night gets a strong Police Force to escort him to the European General Hospital. I need not tell you, Gentlemen, that this was one of the worst streets that day as you are all aware of this and it speaks more than I can say to the praise of Mr. King to have risked his life for friends and the public when he could have remained at home like others to protect his own family.

Mr. King's endeavours in saving life and assisting humanity were not confined to Bombay, but they extended beyond its limits.

Mr. King has made it his business to save life at the risk of his own, from Plague, drowning, fire etc. and how many lives he has saved he alone knows. And for all this, I think he deserved public recognition.

Mr. Raghunath A. Sule, F. T. S. Ph. D. said as follows:—  
Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

After the eloquent speeches to which you have just listened, I think, I should be acting rightly, by making my remarks as few as I consistently can.

We have met here this evening to suitably appreciate and reward the services rendered by Mr. C. J. King to the good Walkers on the night of that destructive fire. It is right and proper that Mr. King's services should be suitably rewarded. Better reward than our thankful recognition and acknowledgment of those services cannot be conceived. Mr. King's acts have all along been in keeping with his good demeanour. Disinterestedness is the chief characteristic of many public services he has rendered up till now.

Gentlemen, Mr. King has saved the lives of our friends—the Walkers. The help rendered on the occasion to the Walker family by him is out of any proportion to any reward that we may award him, in worldly sense. His acts are simply out of spontaneous feelings of daring and courage which cannot be more suitably appreciated than by thankfully acknowledging their intrinsic worth.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there is no time now left to dilate upon the many good public services rendered by Dr. S. B. and Mrs. Walker, which of course do not need any further commendation from me. But this much I can say, that Mr. King is the saviour of two useful and great personalities and by helping Dr. and Mr. Walker he has laid the whole Bombay public under deep and everlasting obligations.

The Chairman, then, amidst loud cheers, presented to Mr. King a *Gold Watch and Chain*, containing the following inscription, and a *Gold ring*. ‘Presented to C. J. King Esqr. by Mr. and Mrs. Walker as an humble token of gratitude for saving their lives from imminent danger of fire on the 3rd of May 1901 at the risk of his own life.’

Mr. King then replied as follows:—

In accepting this present, which Mr. and Mrs. Walker have been kind enough to give me, I must confess that it is not for any special merit of my own that I can be said to deserve it, but it is from their goodness that they give it. I am sure I don't

deserve it ; what I did by way of sheer duty, what I might have done by running up to the place of fire on that awful night and waking my friends I did nothing but what nature prompted me to do what the particular occasion demanded. There was no time to meditate, no time to devise a plan. The occasion was one in which I should have run to help any other person placed in a similar critical state, or in any like dangerous situation. But when that good man, that philanthropic individual, for whom I have as much esteem as for my own dear brothers and sisters, when, I say, my friend Mr. Walker and his family were concerned, I could not but run to their help without the slightest hesitation. And in doing this, I don't think I have done more than my duty. I am glad, I have been of some service to my friends and the only reward I delight in, and which gives me indeed so much pleasure is the satisfaction of my conscience that I have done my duty and that by doing so, I have now my friends by me. I want no reward for only doing my duty. I have already had my reward a hundredfold.

However, since Mr. and Mrs. Walker have been pleased to give me these presents, I accept them with many thanks and assure them that it is not a little as they call it but that it is really a veritable gold watch with chain and a pendant and a ring. To me it is a most valuable gift and it is a thousand times more valuable as it will serve to preserve the dearest memory of my dearest friends during my life and will be handed down to posterity as it is from friends for whom I have the greatest regard and whose philanthropic work for the good of their countrymen extending over a quater of a century or so, I fully and sincerely appreciate.

Mr. Walker has alluded to my efforts to save the valuable articles with which the Hall was so lavishly supplied ; but any person who had seen the Hall and the way in which he was making use of the various articles in it for public lectures every evening could not but forget danger and face whatever risk there was in endeavouring to save them. I am very sorry there was no time left to save those articles and it grieves me much to think that all those valuables collected by Mr. Walker with so much care for years were burnt before our eyes when I, Mr. Walker and

a number of others were simply helplessly standing by witnessing their destruction as mere lookers-on.

Now, as for the other instances of my being of any service to my fellow creatures alluded to by Mr. Walker and by the other speakers, I have simply to say that on those occasions, too, I only did my duty, and that is what I shall endeavour to do as long as I live and the Almighty gives me health and strength to do so.

In conclusion, I again thank Mr. and Mrs. Walker for their valuable presents.

After this the Chairman pronounced the benediction, and Rao Bahadur Bhaskar Rao Balkrishnaji Pitale, J. P., proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman for his able conduct in the chair, which was seconded and carried unanimously.

The guests were than sumptuously treated with refreshments which were duly partaken by them, and Mr. and Mrs. Walker were thanked for their hospitality and courtesy, after which the assemblage dispersed.

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## Summary.

Ours has been the privilege of writing a short sketch of Rebekah's life and we are glad that we have been able to finish this sacred and happy task.

Rebekah was a sweet child of nature and was born to live an ideal life unique in its character.

When we study the heavens we find not all the stars of the same dimension nor of equal brilliancy. We turn to Nature we find but one Amazon among the rivers and one Himalayas among the mountains. Similarly the history of human progress records but one Phidias among sculptors, one Rembrandt among painters, one Demosthenes among orators, one Archimedias or Lilawati among mathematicians, one Shakespeare or Kalidas among dramatists, so there was born but one Rebekah with such kaleidoscopic traits of character as Rebekah—the Authoress, Rebekah—the Child Reformer, Rebekah—the Educationist, Rebekah—the Philanthropist, Rebekah—the Saviour of the Down-trodden, and the Untouchable, Rebekah—the Mother of the Poor and the Forlorn.

As a child she was full of refinement, virtue and nobility and possessed a sympathetic heart. The two touching anecdotes narrated in these pages during her childhood are enough to class her among one of the finest children of nature, destined to make her career and gain a distinguished place in the civilised world.





Her husband while a mere lad before his marriage was reduced to penury at the sudden death of his father. He was given shelter by a friend of his father. In those days he struggled hard through grinding poverty and educated himself in spite of great difficulties and endless obstacles. As he grew up he found himself drawn to literature and philosophy. He was a restless spirit, hankering after knowledge and continuing his literary pursuits which brought him in the beginning a scanty earning. When he reached his legal maturity, his mother proposed marriage which he refused on the ground that his means were slender. But eventually he yielded to her solicitude.

He had in view the amiable Rebekah, the maiden whom he thought a capable companion to sail the bark of life to a safe port. Her parents agreed and the marriage took place. Their union proved a most fortunate and happy one. By their strength of will they swept aside every obstacle that sprung on their way. She was a sweet and thoughtful companion and spoke to her husband in the language of Ruth :—"Urge me not to leave thee, to return from following thee ; for whither thou goest, will I go ; and where thou lodgest will I lodge : thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die and there will I be buried."

In Simeon's most trying times she was his ever faithful friend and uncomplaining consort. He began to undertake the literary work which gained for him an enviable position among the citizens of the

Bombay Presidency. His works produced a revenue and every form of desirable recognition came.

Simeon started his work of moulding his bride after his heart, the very first week of his married life, by placing a book in her hand and giving her lessons. She cheerfully submitted to the desire of her lord and was never known to cross his wishes. Within a short time she made extra-ordinary progress and through her husband's strenuous efforts she climbed the heights. She gained a profession and devoted her life to the amelioration of her sisters in distress. In the course of time they acquired a library worth about Rs. 10,000. They both studied and read together, argued, discussed and deliberated on the knotty problems of life.

Simeon developed into a forcible writer and a speaker. His pen was keen and facile. He wrote on a vast variety of subjects with clearness and force. His knowledge grew to be an extensive one. As an orator he was unquestionably of the first order. People thronged to hear him. He was a great critic and original in his thought. His speeches had a touch of wit and humour in them. He was a born leader of men. He would compel the attention and respect even of his enemies. He sacrificed his life for the sake of liberty of thought and liberty of action. He would sway audiences as if he possessed a magic wand. He was an intellectual giant.

It was he who pointed out to the public and the Director of Public Instructions certain love poems and other inconsistent poems of the Hindu poets in the Standard School Books which were likely to

create unwholesome impression on the pliable minds of the children. There were some poems, he argued, meant for advanced scholars, as a beautiful description of the fun and frolic in which lovers indulge themselves but he emphasised that school books were no place for them. His criticism of Hindu poets created a storm of opposition as the Brahmin pandits thought that the condemnation of their revered poets books by a foreigner like Simeon was an act of desecration on his part. Of course, the right was on his side. They misunderstood him but in spite of their foaming and raging, he won the battle. These poems were expunged from the later editions by the Educational Authorities of the land.

It was he who was selected by the learned and the righteous ruler, the Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda in preference to thousands of Brahmin Pundits to translate in Marathi "Imitation of Christ" a copy of which was presented to the Maharajah by the late Queen Victoria on his first visit to England, which he appreciated as an invaluable gift. Simeon accomplished the task with credit to himself and the Maharajah rewarded him handsomely for his labours.

It was again Simeon who was asked by the benign Maharajah to translate "Meditations of Marcus Auralius" into Marathi and he executed it to the satisfaction of the Maharajah.

It was Simeon who proved in his work "Yoga-sadhana" by the words of Hindu poets and philosophers and by the teachings of their Sastras that he who lives a life of purity, simplicity, humility

and gives himself to the service of humanity is the greatest Jogi. He impressed on the minds of the people that there was no Jog greater than that of the Karma *i. e.*, living a righteous life and serving humanity.

It was Simeon's publication of the descriptive scene in the Bandra Slaughter-House which was so intensely pathetic that it filled the hearts of thousands of men, women and children with horror and they were so much touched with the result that they were converted to the creed of vegetarianism.

Besides his other publications such as "Politeness" "The Origin of Morality", "Vegetarianism", "How to Punish Children", "Conscience", Prohibition of Bad Words", "On the Evil Habit of Looking at Woman with a Sinful Eye". His series of Lectures on "The Importance of Anatomy and Physiolgy", "The Importance of Truth", "Acting according to Belief", "Contracts and Promises", "Lying", "Chastity" "Self-control" and several others are a monument of his philanthropic activities and need no words of ours.

He joined the Medical College as a private student to study medical sciences by paying a handsome sum when he was father of eight children. His object in studying these was not for self-gain but to serve his country by enlightening the people by his words and pen to the right and healthy living. His speeches and publications did incalculable good and dissipated the gloom of ignorance from the minds of his countrymen.

Men, women and children were ever anxious to hear the gifted speaker. People loved to hear him,

women ever and anon encored him to deliver the same lectures, as they were so interesting. He was master of the language and his delivery was sweet and sonorous. His subjects were well-chosen. He was resourceful and full of originality. They were moral as well as intellectual treats. The small and the great, the literate and the illiterate, the young and the old, the learned and the unlearned, the graduates and the undergraduates paid homage to his learning and his stock of vast information. Not only did he deliver lectures on useful subjects but was the central figure of the intelligent platform to move and give impetus to other men of the city of Bombay to act by imparting their knowledge to their fellow-beings. He was always on the move and knew no rest. He brought doctors and chemists, lawyers and professors, monks and musicians, Hakims and Kabirajes, Saniyasees and Jogies, Pandits and Ved Shastrees, Reverends and Rabbis, Munshis and Moulvies, to play their part on the public platform by imparting their knowledge to the people on the subjects in which they were efficient and proficient to speak. He poured his and his wife's earnings for this sacred cause. Their philanthropy was not of the common order, as some people remarked that the celebrated couple had a mania for serving humanity.

For his zeal, enthusiasm, moral courage, mental vigour and the so-called mania for giving knowledge to others, he was called *Socrates of India* by the late Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade in his public utterances before an intelligent audience. He was so struck with the magnanimous activities of the

couple that he thought that this great virtue was an inheritance of the people they took birth in and termed the couple saints.

By this time Rebekah's professional celebrity spread like wild-fire. She kept pace with her husband. The husband influenced the thousands, the wife received the encomiums from tens of thousands. While he was a king among men, she became a queen among women. Her name became a household word. She started working for the amelioration of her sex. Her efforts breathed the hope for social freedom of women. She bitterly denounced all inequity and injustice in the social order. She proclaimed with her sweet voice that religion was not belief but life. She brought a ray of sunshine into thousands of darkened lives. She gave the best and noblest in her to uplift her sex. She gave all she possessed to the cause of the unfortunates and the downtrodden and to those despised of the life's joyous opportunities.

We cherish the nobility and sublimity of her heart when her husband asked her to bedeck herself with more suitable ornaments in keeping with her position. She replied, "That virtue, kindness and love for one's husband, are rich ornaments of a woman, and their possession enhances her beauty." We bow our head before the wife and mother who has grace enough and sense enough to point out to her husband his duty before allowing him to offer her unnecessary and costly gifts. We have every respect for that type of womanhood that will sacrifice desire and every personal comfort for the benefit of humanity.

In spite of her manifold activities she never neglected her home. She made herself efficient in culinary art and needle work.

She published a number of books useful for women and contributed largely to the Vernacular papers. She also spoke several times from women's platform. She was a student until the day of her death. She remembered the wants of the poor and not only helped them herself but induced others who were beyond the reach of the poor to help them.

In her professional calls she was never known to refuse a case however tired she might have been. A knock at the door and Rebekah was on her feet from her bed to start to attend to the patient. Her heart had the supremacy over her head where human suffering was concerned. She adapted herself to suit the rich as well as the poor. How often she returned with floods of tears in her eyes, minus her purse from the poverty stricken patients after witnessing their heart-rending condition and their untold miseries.

She fed and educated a number of children and supplied all their wants. She paid school-fees for a number of indigent children. She supplied monthly provisions of food etc. to many families and paid their debts and their arrears of rent, month after month and year after year. We have already, recorded specific instances of her bringing up and educating indigent children of all nationalities without any distinction of caste, creed or colour. Whereever there was misery, an appeal to Rebekah never went in vain. Such was her magnanimous heart. She was cosmopolitan in her acts of charity.

She largely subsidised the night schools opened at her instance for the education of the daily labourers who could not afford to attend the day schools. She exerted to educate the untouchables also and spent a good deal of her earning towards their amelioration.

It must be fresh in your minds if you have gone through these pages the pathetic and heart-rending story of the unfortunate widow who was taken advantage of by the land sharks in human shape ready to suck the last drop of her blood and who was ultimately saved by Rebekah. She sold her house to Simeon for Rs. 6,000/- as he offered Rs. 500/- more than others. The bargain was completed, yet when Rebekah heard about her distressed condition she gave her Rs 1000/- more with the remarks that she was not giving her a charity of Rs. 1,000/-, but towards the value of her house.

Another equally striking incident was about her husband expressing his desire to visit a poor acquaintance of his lying in a hospital with an attack of plague. She instantly remarked that such visits have not much merit in them unless they assume a practical form. The import of her remarks was that her husband should take a substantial sum for his nourishment and medical attendance as lip sympathy would avail him nothing. Her husband bowed to her valuable suggestion and followed her advice. With this timely help the patient rallied and remembered him with gratitude all the days of his life.

Her kindness to her servants was equally commendable. She said that our good and faithful

servants have as much claim on us as our children. She always made it her duty to see them comfortable. She had a faithful servant named Sonoo. She paid his debts and released him from the clutches of the money lender, she built a house for him, got him married and provided for his people. She believed that good servants contribute a great deal towards our success in life.

Rebekah and her husband were by no means opulent. They were people of ordinary means with a large family. They were not the accumulators of wealth and acted not as its sentinels. The motto of their life was "service" to humanity "and they preached that there was no religion greater than that.

Rebekah was clever in nursing and rearing of children. Her house was a miniature sanctuary where she bequeathed the best ideals to her children. Home is a place where children will be made either honourable citizens of the future or the weaklings of to-morrow. Home will turn them into either respectable men and women or drones in the public bee-hive.

Rebekah was a good wife, a good mother, a good friend and a good citizen. The poets and the pundits have vied with one another in singing her praises until language has been exhausted and yet we find they have not paid one tithe of the praise to which she is entitled to.

One day Semion thought seriously over the question of prejudice that existed between the members of different religionists. To destroy this obnoxious spirit he laid the foundation of an organisation called the "Society for Promoting Morals" on the broad

principle of toleration. His wife and mother joined him in this herculean task. The undaunted trio exercised a wonderful influence on the people. In a short time they collected a large army of followers of which Simeon became a commander-in-chief and unfurled his banner of truth. Thousands entered its fold by Simeon's power of moral force. Its doctrine of peace, love, good-will, sympathy, toleration, character, use of reason and common sense acted as a long-range gun and smashed all opposition.

Simeon found out that religion, as popularly understood and observed, was a sham and a delusion. It created bigotry and hypocrisy. He emphasised with all the eloquence at his command that religion was life and nothing else. Conduct and character are the only passport to heaven. He preached that every table was an altar, every man a priest and every individual his own saviour. He dispelled the bats and owls of superstition. He brought light to those who sat in darkness. He accepted nothing on blind faith. He bowed to no caprice or custom. Reason was his guide in all matters.

The society produced great thinkers and speakers who caused a revolution in society and changed the trend of thought of the country. It had scores of branches in the Bombay Presidency.

Rebekah's seven letters to her daughters while they were in America for their education are worthy of note and her advice to her daughter Elizabeth when she obtained a diploma and became a full-fledged doctor and took charge of a hospital in one of the cities of America ought to be written in gold

letters and hung in every hospital in the world. It was as follows :—

*"Treat every patient as if your own mother was under your treatment and take the same care and pay the same attention to him or her that you would to your mother. And inculcate this principle on the staff as well under you."*

Rebekah built a Lecture Hall called "Temple of Literature, Science and Hygiene," at a considerable cost, where lectures were delivered daily by able men on all useful and practical subjects. It had become the rage of the city. The young men as well as the old, after office hours instead of going for some kind of recreation flocked to the Hall to benefit themselves. They were more than compensated for their trouble. Simeon was found always in the fore front. He was the life and soul of the Institution which was of an uncommon type in India.

Simeon himself prepared hundreds of lectures which were to be delivered in one hundred series of lectures intended for the Hall. Rebekah also prepared a good many for the benefit of her sex.

The "Western University" published at Chicago eulogised Rebekah and her husband for the noble undertaking they were engaged in—to teach people how to live right, teach mothers the laws of maternity, and teach the fathers, sons, and daughters to control and master abnormal appetites and passions, which are the causes of all the misery and wretchedness and sin in this world.

Within a year, to the great misfortune of the

country, the Hall with numerous charts, atlases, instruments, appliances, Library and above all Simeon's hundreds of manuscripts, his life long years' labour, caught fire and was burned to ashes. His property over a couple of lakhs of rupees was reduced to ashes.

Both Simeon and Rebekah would have fallen victims to the raging fire had it not been for the timely help given by Mr. Joshua King who at the nick of time climbed the burning staircase, roused them from their sleep and brought them down in their night clothes.

On the heels of this disaster comes the final stroke of misfortune, Rebekha's death, which put an end to all their activities.

In the very heyday of life, when she had reached the zenith of her popularity and when the world needed her valuable services the most, the icy blasts of death blew upon her and carried her away.

Though Rebekah has departed this world, her spirit is ever present with us. The fragrance of her virtue and her sterling qualities will always be with us like the perfume of a rose, even after it has passed away. The inestimable service which she has rendered to humanity shall remain green in our memory as long as language lasts. The world would have been poorer had it not been for the inspiration of such noble souls.

Did Rebekah aspire for wealth? Did she aspire for name or fame? No, none of these. Had she desired she could have got both. She admired the good and the noble and virtue, piety and above all

the self sacrifice. Her spirit converses with us whenever we think of her with undeniable force.

Let us close this last Chapter with the words of George Eliot, and feel that these revered dead form

"The Choir invisible  
Of those immortal dead who live again  
In minds made better by their presence : live  
In pulses stirred to generosity,  
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn  
For miserable aims that end with self,  
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,  
And with their mind persistence urge man's search  
To vaster issues."

And to be plain what is this "Choir invisible" of which George Eliot speaks ? It is the noble deeds of that noble soul who has lived to serve others, who influenced lofty ideals in the minds of humanity ; who had given self to the world without any hope of reward here or hereafter, who has helped others without seeking recognition ; who has given all for love without counting the cost, these form "the choir invisible."

Rebekah speaks to us through her deed with more power than when she was living. The voice that comes from beyond the grave though silent to our fleshy ears reverberates constantly with a force greater than that of the living. We feel her enshrined presence whenever we think of her. Her spirit is ever awake though her body sleeps. We get inspiration from her unseen presence. The sweet memory of the sainted dead cannot die and defies this conqueror death. The conqueror may boast of its victory over the body but the immortal spirit laughs at the victor

and asks O Death where is thy sting and where is thy victory ? Our dead only die when we forget them . And is it possible to forget the soul who loved us, who spoke to us with sweetness, who filled us with her nobility, and who died for us with willingness ? These are the evidences of her immortality. She is with us wherever we go. We are under the inspiration of her example.

“Weeping eyes, elaborate funerals, the showy memorials, the magnificent tombs are not worthy tributes to the memory of the dead.”

“He mourns the dead who lives as they desire.”

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